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ABSTRACT

Based on observations of hundreds of school-age child care programs across the nation and conversations with parents, children, and professionals in school-age care, this videotape and viewers' guide is intended to help parents, caregivers, and interested citizens to develop quality school-age programs in their communities. The materials are intended for use in workshop-type settings to provide a framework for answering questions, generating creative ideas, and solving problems in developing a school-age care program. The videotape opens with a series of scenes from several school-age programs, showing quality environments. It then introduces and illustrates the four keys to quality in school-age care: (1) planning with school-age children in mind; (2) organizing for diversity and choice; (3) viewing parents as partners with programs; and (4) collaborating with others who can help. The viewers' guide for this videotape summarizes the videotape, then presents four training modules with exercises, based on the four keys to quality. The rest of the viewers' guide presents supplementary readings and worksheets of relevance to school-age programs on such topics as programming for older children, problem solving, and keeping parents informed. (HTH)

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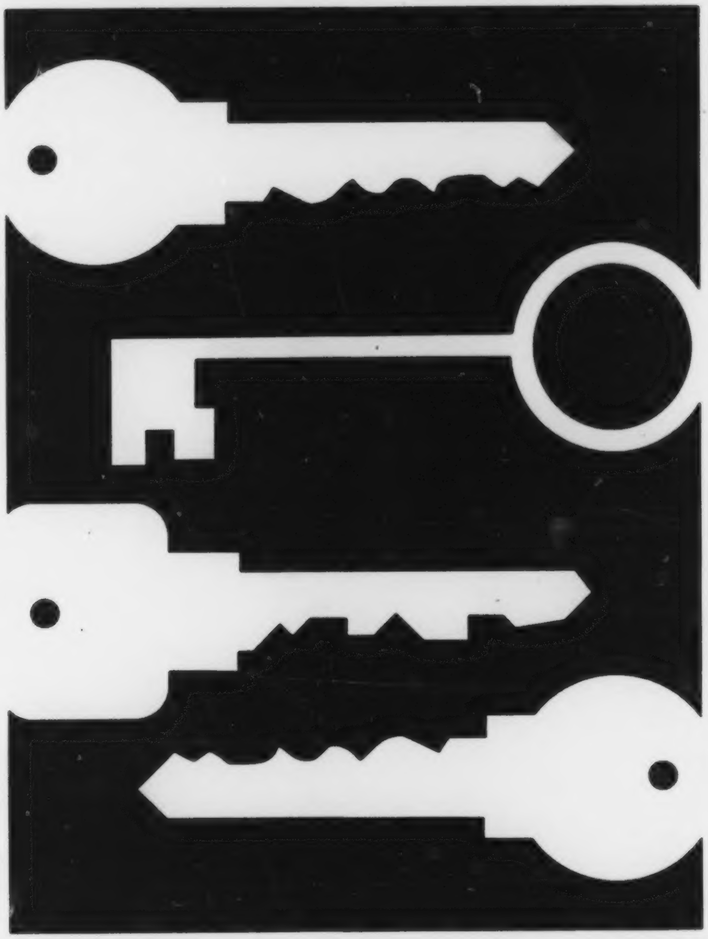
## Viewer's Guide

# Keys to Quality in School-Age Child Care



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# Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals

# Keys to Quality in School-Age Child Care

Roberta L. Newman

Developed with funding from
Child Care Connection, Inc.
Wilmington, Delaware

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## Video Production Credits

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in collaboration with:

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and

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Rockville, Maryland

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# Introduction

## The Wealth of Diversity in School-Age Care

The availability of out of school programs for school-age children is steadily increasing in communities across the nation. Many different groups and organizations are involved in the development and operation of programs--public and independent schools, recreation agencies, religious organizations, youth agencies, child care centers, parent groups, and many others. Programs are housed in a wide variety of settings. Some have their own dedicated space. But very often school-age programs are housed in space which is used by other groups for a portion of the day such as cafeterias and gymnasiums, multi-purpose rooms, or school classrooms. The types of activities offered by programs is varied. Depending on the philosophy and purpose of the sponsoring agency, programs may emphasize sports and outdoor recreation, arts and crafts, enrichment activities, special clubs and hobby groups, homework and tutorial help, field trips and special visitors, community involvement, or some combination of all of these.

One of the reasons for the diversity among school-age programs is that no single organization or group is solely responsible for developing and operating these programs. Another reason for the diversity among programs relates to the fact that staff in these programs come from many different fields and have received different levels and types of training. For example, programs might be staffed by caregivers with college or associate degrees in recreation, early childhood or elementary education, child development, or psychology. Or they might be staffed by caregivers who have not received additional training or education beyond high school. Still another reason for the diversity of programs is that they tend to reflect the characteristics, values, interests, and available resources of local communities.

The wealth of diversity in school-age child care provides us with a rich source of program models as we develop new programs and work to improve existing ones. However, this diversity can also be frustrating to parents and others who want to know how to recognize and build on elements of quality in school-age programs. Parents, program developers, caregivers, and others in the community often ask questions such as:

* Are there common characteristics of quality in school-age programs, regardless of where they are housed or who operates them?

* What kind of space is most suitable for school-age programs?

* What kinds of activities should be available to children in school-age programs? Should children do homework in these programs?

* What kinds of equipment and supplies should be available?

* How much freedom, choice, and independence should children have in school-age programs? How much structure do school-age children need during leisure hours? How much time should children spend in group games or adult-directed activities?

* Who should be the leaders, teachers, or caregivers in programs for school-age children? What is their role? What kind of training and preparation do they need?

* What can be done to get older elementary school children more interested in attending school-age programs?

* What is the role of parents in school-age programs?

* How can school-age programs help children develop relationships with peers and others in their communities?

## Using the Video and Viewer's Guide as a Basis for Planning and Developing Quality Programs

The video **Keys to Quality in School-Age Child Care** and companion **Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals** are intended to provide a framework for answering important questions, generating creative ideas, and solving problems as you develop quality programs for school-age children. The video and Viewer's Guide are organized around four **Keys to Quality** which grew out of the producer's observations of hundreds of school-age programs across the nation and conversations with parents, children, and school-age professionals representing a wide variety of out-of-school programs. The video summary in the next section provides an overview of the four **Keys to Quality**. Following the video summary, are separate modules on each **Key to Quality**. Each module contains a series of exercises related to the concepts presented in the video.

The video and **Viewer's Guide** can be used in several ways for training purposes. Recognizing that school-age professionals often assume multiple roles as directors, supervisors, and caregivers, the materials are intended for use by different levels of staff. The **Viewer's Guide** is presented in a format which lends itself to a workshop setting. For example, you might use it as a participant in a workshop organized for professionals from different types of school-age programs. Or you might use it along with a group of co-workers participating in an in-service program for your own organization. If it is not possible for you to participate in a group workshop or in-service program with other school-age professionals, you can use the guide as a self-study tool or in a partnership arrangement with a mentor, co-worker, or supervisor.

Regardless of whether you use the guide in a group setting or as a self-study tool, it is recommended that you view the video in its entirety before working on any of the exercises. Because the video is clearly divided into separate segments for each **Key to Quality**, you can return to video excerpts on each key for a closer look as you work on various exercises.

Once you have completed the exercises in the **Viewer's Guide**, you may want to use the **"Keys to Quality"** video as a resource to share with parent groups, school personnel, or others in your community who should know about quality school-age child care. A separate **Trainer's Guide** contains a special section with suggestions for presenting the video to these groups.

## Video Program Summary

The video features a practical, step by step approach to understanding and using **four keys to quality** to unlock the doors to quality programs:

| | |
|---|---|
| Key #1: | Planning with School-Age Children in Mind |
| Key #2: | Organizing for Diversity and Choice |
| Key #3: | Viewing Parents as Partners with Programs |
| Key #4: | Collaborating with Others Who Can Help |

Regardless of where they are housed or who is responsible for their operation, quality programs address issues related to these four keys.

### Introductory Segment

The video opens with a series of live scenes from several school-age programs housed in different types of space. The scenes show us school-age environments that are:

- safe and secure;
- warm, caring, and nurturing;
- interesting, varied, creative, stimulating, and fun;
- well-organized;
- comfortable and attractive;
- flexible, friendly, and relaxed;
- balanced with opportunities for freedom and structure, choice and direction, privacy and companionship;
- staffed with people who encourage, guide, and support children's individual growth and development.

This segment ends with the narrator introducing us to the four keys to quality in school-age child care.

## Key #1: Planning with School-Age Children in Mind

This segment emphasizes the importance of planning programs based on the needs and characteristics of school-age children. It opens with a series of comments from school-age children who talk about their favorite things to do out of school and what they like best about their centers. This is followed by an interview with a parent who stresses how much she likes the program because it is geared to the interests and needs of the children. She tells us she especially likes the fact that the children are involved in planning what goes on at the center and that her own child (who is ten years old) really enjoys participating in special clubs.

In the next section, we see children working and playing on their own and in small groups. They are exploring center environments which encourage their curiosity and imagination and allow them to be busy collecting, inventing, and investigating. They are also shown participating in activities that allow them to develop skills and interests that are useful in the "real world". This helps them feel successful, responsible, accepted, and confident. The narrator points out that quality programs offer a flexible, interesting environment which promotes exploration and growing independence. Because school-age children need lots of opportunities to exercise and use their changing bodies, this section closes with scenes which show children "on the move" participating in a variety of physical activities.

One of the most important things to keep in mind about the needs of school-age children is that the school day is equivalent to the child's work day. During school, children spend lots of time in a structured setting, completing tasks and assignments, following direction, and learning new skills. Although most school-age children need some time to do homework after school, they also need time to relax, unwind and be themselves. In this portion of video, we see children participating in a wide range of leisure-time activities. Some are shown enjoying quiet time alone or relaxing with friends; others are unwinding after the school day by engaging in vigorous physical activities and games. The segment on Key #1 ends with the narrator telling us that quality programs offer a wide range of activities to complement the school day, recognizing there should be a qualitative difference between out of school time and in school time.

## Key #2: Organizing for Diversity and Choice

The video introduces **Key #2** by stating that quality programs are well-organized. The narrator highlights the importance of organizing programs in a way that both supports the characteristic needs of school-age children and respects individual differences among them.

The first program component that needs to be well-organized is **Space**. The way environments look have a strong affect on people. The viewer is shown scenes of an empty cafeteria and classroom and is asked to consider how it would feel to spend every morning or afternoon in empty spaces like these. It can be challenging to operate quality programs in areas which must be set up and taken down every day. Yet, with creativity and cooperation it can be done. In the next scenes we see staff and children working together to transform a cafeteria and stage area into a functional, attractive, comfortable environment for a school-age program. The narrator notes that by helping shape and set up their environment each day, these school-age children are learning to be resourceful and responsible.

In the next section, we see children using a variety of equipment and supplies in a program which shares space and one which has exclusive use of a center room. The children use special areas for table toys, board and card games, science, dramatic play, large muscle activities, music and dance, reading and homework, building, and arts and crafts. The next scenes show that space is set up to allow many activities to take place at once and that traffic patterns are designed to help children get from place to place without disrupting each other. We see that areas which are naturally noisy are separated from quiet areas. Special areas are reserved for clubs, storage of long term projects, and indoor sports and games. The space in these programs is organized so that both group and individual activities can take place at the same time. And a "homey" feeling is created by using large pillows, bean bags, rocking chairs, throw rugs, or carpet squares.

The narrator closes this section by emphasizing that quality programs make the best use of available space by going through five organizational steps which are presented as a graphic:

1. They analyze the space--it's possibilities and problems.
2. They select appropriate equipment and supplies.
3. They design "interest areas".
4. They create a comfortable atmosphere.
5. They involve children in shaping their environment.

The second program component that needs to be well-organized to ensure quality is **Staff.** The narrator opens this section by observing that the quality of the staff often determines the quality of the program. This statement is followed by scenes of caregivers who are comfortable in many roles--being a leader, a listener, a participant, a participant, a monitor and observer, a mediator and problem solver, a guide, and an adult friend. The final scene in this section shows a program leader meeting with children about the kinds of things they would like to do at the center. This scene highlights the importance of listening and talking with children, getting involved in their activities without interfering, treating children with respect, and giving children support and encouragement as they work to become more independent.

In the next section, we listen to interviews with several caregivers and program directors as we watch them in action with the children. They discuss their views of what school-age children need staff to provide for them--safety, lots of planned "fun" activities, understanding, affection, individualized attention and interest in what they are doing, a relaxed atmosphere, help in establishing a spirit of togetherness, positive role models, and a sense of security.

Following the interviews, the narrator indicates that staff in quality programs know how to plan a schedule that works for school-age children. We see a graphic which identifies the **Characteristics of Schedules in Quality Programs:**

- They are paced to meet the varying needs of the children.
- They balance time for quiet and active periods.
- They allow for changes in plans.
- They allow for simultaneous diverse activities.
- They allow for smooth transitions.

This segment on **Key #2** closes with another graphic which summarizes the **Qualities of Staff Who Provide Flexible Programs** which support diversity and choice:

1. They are good at playing many different roles and are well-organized.
2. They listen and talk with children.
3. They adjust to changes in children's needs and interests.
4. They treat children with respect.
5. They help each child grow towards independence.
6. They like to share interests and skills with children.

## Key #3: Viewing Parents as Partners with Programs

This segment of the video opens with scenes of parents interacting with their children and center staff. While we watch these scenes, the narrator introduces the idea that quality programs recognize that they must serve parents well if they want to succeed with children. In addition, the narrator observes that staff in quality programs understand that parents are the most important people in children's lives and that they have different values, beliefs, attitudes, customs, and needs. In addition, staff in quality programs work hard to understand and support parental stresses, pressures, concerns, hopes and dreams for their children.

Following this introduction, three parents of school-age children comment on ways they like to be involved with their child's program. One parent notes she got together with the staff and planned a Mardi Gras party for all the children. She says she appreciated the staff's interest in this project because her family is from Louisiana and she wants her children to know about the traditions. Another parent comments that she really appreciates the open communication at her center and the fact that staff respond to parent's questions and concerns. A father mentions the opportunities for parents to participate in organizing and helping with field trips and hobby clubs.

The parent comments are followed by more scenes of parents at the center while the narrator suggests additional ways for parents to be involved--participating on an advisory board, attending a performance by the children, contributing volunteer time, sharing special talents or resource materials for center activities.

The segment on **Key #3** concludes with a graphic which summarizes **Viewing Parents as Partners with Programs**. The graphic lists four components:

1. Accepting parents as the most important people in children's lives
2. Assessing the various needs of parents
3. Accommodating parent's needs to be involved in different ways
4. Developing an Alliance with parents as resourceful partners

## Key #4: Collaborating with Others Who Can Help

As the segment of the video devoted to Key #4 opens, we see a variety of individuals and organizations who have resources that could benefit and enrich school-age programs. We also see examples of the kinds of organizations who often work together to sponsor programs through contractual agreements--schools, P.T.A.'s, churches, and youth and community agencies. During these scenes, the narrator discusses the importance of open, direct communication and cooperation among all those involved.

After the opening section, we hear an interview with an elementary school principal who underscores the importance of school support for school-age programs housed in elementary school buildings. She describes the school-age program at her school as a valuable resource to children, parents, and school staff. Because of this, she states her strong commitment to doing whatever is necessary to help it be successful. In closing, she states: "Day care is a national issue. We have to insure that children have quality day care."

The final segment of Key #4 gives us a look at ways programs can work with others to ensure that children connect community resources such as museums, recreation centers, businesses, libraries, and people with interesting talents and skills to share.

## Conclusion

The concluding segment of the video shows scenes of parents and children leaving their centers at the end of the day. The narrator then reviews a graphic of the four keys to quality and urges parents and community groups to remember them when selecting and developing school-age child care programs. The video concludes with a series of portraits of children's faces--faces of children who are happily and productively engaged in quality school-age programs.

## The Training Modules and Exercises

The next section of the **Viewer's Guide** for School-Age **Professionals** contains four modules which focus on the four **Keys to Quality** featured in the video. Each module begins with a **Preview** which sets the tone for the exercises which follow. The exercises are designed to help you explore the issues, problems, and concerns raised in the video and in the module **Preview**.

All of the exercises are designed as small group activities. Most encourage follow-up group discussions. If you do the exercises as part of a workshop or in-service training program, your trainer may delete or expand them, depending on the number of participants, the time available for training, the goals of the group, etc. In some cases, there is more than one exercise provided on the same topic or problem. Your trainer will select the one most suited to the training situation. It is unlikely that you would do all of the exercises as part of one workshop on the module.

If you are not able do the activities in a group setting, most can be adapted for use on your own or with a partner. Many exercises are followed by additional sections titled: Extension of This Exercise and/or Variation of This Exercise. In addition, many exercises are followed by Independent Learning Suggestions so that you can do them on your own. If you plan to use the modules independently, you may want to purchase the **Trainer's Guide** to the video which contains additional background information and answer guides for many of the exercises.

Module One

Video Key #1:

## Planning Programs with School-Age Children in Mind

### Preview

The main reason it is important to base the plans for school-age programs on the needs of the children is simple--children will want to attend! School-age children have definite ideas about what they want to do, when and how they want to do it, where they want to go, and who they want to work and play with them as they explore the world. When this growing spirit of independence is respected, guided, and nurtured appropriately, school-age children can thrive.

The video introduces us to some of the main characteristics of school-age children. It portrays them as curious, industrious, active learners who are in the process of expanding their world beyond the family unit and growing gradually towards independence. It shows us that they want to learn how to do things that are useful in the "real world"; they want to feel competent and confident. And it shows us that they like to have time alone as well as time to work and play with others.

Unlike preschoolers, school-age children often participate in decisions about how and where they will spend their time. When programs fail to take a close look at who school-age children are and what they need, children can tell. And one of two things usually happens. They may convince their parents not to enroll them by saying things like: "That place is for babies; they do the same stuff I did in preschool." "Nobody likes it there--you always have to do the same thing everybody else is doing." "I can take care of myself." Or, if they are already enrolled in a program that doesn't address their needs, school-age children may make it evident through their behavior that they don't want to be there. It's often said that "school-age children vote with their feet"; if they don't like the program, if it doesn't meet their needs, if it isn't fun, they'll find a way not to participate.

On the following pages, you will find a variety of exercises designed to help you tune in to 1) the characteristic needs and interests of school-age children and 2) the individual differences among school-age children. As you work through the exercises, remember that although all school-age children pass through the same developmental stages as they grow, the way children experience the challenges of these stages will be different. This means that programs must be designed to support both the general needs of school-age children and the varying individual differences among them. In fact, the biggest challenge in program development may be: **how to create and implement programs that can accommodate and respond to individual differences among school-age children in a group setting.**

## Exercise 1 A: What School-Age Children Want from School-Age Programs

Resources

Magic Marker
Chart Paper
Masking Tape

Time Needed for Group Work

20 to 30 minutes

Instructions

School-age children have lots of good ideas and some strong opinions about what they want to do when they're not in school. In your group, have each member assume the role of one school-age child between the ages of 5 and 12. Each person should pick an age that feels familiar (i.e. an age participants remember from their own childhoods). Be sure the "children" represent different ages. Then, have a group discussion from the children's perspectives. Structure the discussion by having each "child" complete the following statement with as many answers as come to mind:

"When I go to my center, I want to..............."

Participants might say things like: "I want to play with my friends." "I want to eat." "I want to go outside." "I want to be left alone." Some groups have come up with as many as forty responses to this statement. Have one person in your group list your responses on chart paper so that you can share them with others when you've finished the task. How many things do the "children" in your group want to do?

**Important Tip:** This is a role play activity. Be sure each participant assumes a child's role throughout the exercise. If you begin by saying things like: "Well, what I **think** children want to do is.........", you will be seeing things from an adult perspective--not from a child's perspective. Remember, the purpose of this exercise is to think like children again--to walk in their shoes for a few moments. Try to express yourself the way children do--the more you talk like a child, the more authentic your responses will be. When your group of "children" can't think of any more things they want to do, discuss the following questions as you review your list together:

1. Which items on the list would be easy to accommodate?
2. Which items on the list would be difficult to accommodate?
3. What are the barriers to accommodating various items on the list? How could you overcome these barriers?
4. Do some items on the list conflict with what parents might want? What school personnel might want? What school-age professionals might want? What could be done to resolve these conflicts?
5. How have the programs featured in the video accommodated the wants of school-age children?

Be prepared to share your list of wants and your responses to the above questions during large group discussion.

Variation of This Exercise

**Remembering Your Own Childhood.**

Pick an age in your own childhood that you remember fairly well. Relax and close your eyes for a few moments and reflect on what your life was like at this age. Spend a few minutes thinking about the following kinds of questions:

* What was your home and family like?
* What was your neighborhood like?
* What did you do immediately after school?
* Where did you go when you were not in school?
* Who did you spend your time with during out of school hours?
* Were you interested in learning how to do certain things? If yes, what were they?
* What did you like to do with your friends?
* Were there other people you wanted to get to know? If yes, who were they and why did you want to know them?
* What did you feel really good about?
* What did you feel not so good about? Or worried about?
* What did you need most from the adults in your life?
* If you had to think of one word or phrase to describe what you were like at this age, what would it be?
* Did you attend a child care program every day after school when you were this age? If yes, how did you feel about it? What did you like about it? What should have been different?
* If you didn't attend a child care program at this age, what would a program have had to offer in order to make you want to attend?

Discuss your childhood memories with members of the group. Share your answers to the above questions as long as you feel comfortable doing so. As you talk, think about additional questions such as:

* What things did members of your group have in common as children?
* How were you different from each other?
* How was your childhood similar to the childhood of school-age children today? How was it different? What are the implications of these similarities or differences for school-age programs?

**Note:** Sometimes it is difficult for adults to reflect on their childhood experiences, particularly if childhood brings back difficult or painful memories. If this is too difficult for you, think about the childhood of someone else you know well and reflect on the same questions. Whether you choose to reflect on your own childhood or on the childhood of someone else, it's important to recognize that childhood is not always a time of pleasant, happy experiences. Some of the children with whom you work may also be experiencing difficult times. Your empathy, understanding, and support will be invaluable to these children.

## Independent Learning Suggestions

Write down your own answers to either of the above activities. Ask a co-worker to do the same. Then compare your responses and talk about the implications for school-age programs. Discuss these implications with your supervisor or with others in the community.

## Exercise 1 B: What Are School-Age Children Like?

Resources

Magic Marker
Chart Paper
Masking Tape

Time Needed for Group Work

20 to 30 minutes

Instructions

Brainstorm a list of characteristics that you think are common to school-age children. Record your list on chart paper. When you cannot think of any additional characteristics, use the following questions to refine your list:

1. What characteristics do you think are typical of almost all school-age children? Circle all these items.
2. What characteristics do you think are typical of more than half of school-age children? Place a star by these items.
3. What characteristics do you think describe less than half of school-age children? Place two stars by these items.
4. What characteristics do you think describe only a very small percentage of school-age children? Place three stars by these items.

When you have finished reviewing your list, make any final adjustments. Then, create four separate lists, using the above categories. Share and compare your lists with those of other groups during large group discussion.

## Extension of This Exercise

**Characteristics of Different Age Groups.** In trying to identify the common characteristics of school-age children, you may have felt that certain traits seem to describe younger school-age children, but did not necessarily apply to older children. It can be helpful to think of school-age children in three different age groups: 1) 5 - 7 year olds, 2) 8 - 10 year olds, and 3) 11 and 12 year olds. Think about the children you know in each of these age groups and make a list of characteristics you think are common to each age group. Then share your answers in group discussion.

> **Note:** Often, school-age programs focus primarily on the needs of younger children because that is where the heaviest enrollment is. However, in order to keep children interested in programs as they grow and develop, it is necessary to make program adjustments which are keyed to the needs and interests of older children. See the article on programming for older children which appears in the **Supplementary Readings** section to help you make these adjustments.

## Independent Learning Suggestions

1. **Observation of School-Age Children in a Group.** Observe the same group of school-age children for 30 to 45 minutes on at least three different occasions. Note your observations by writing down your answers to the following questions. Then discuss them with a co-worker or supervisor.

    * What common characteristics do the children exhibit?
    * Do their needs seem to be met in the setting you observed? If yes, give some examples. If not, why not?
    * Based on the common characteristics you observed, what are the implications for planning an out of school program of activities for these children? What would the program have to be like in order to meet their needs?

2. **Four Developmental Characteristics.** Child development specialists often describe children's characteristics in terms of four areas of development: 1) Physical Development, 2) Intellectual Development, 3) Emotional Development, and 4) Social Development. Read the following brief summaries of characteristic needs in these four areas. Then, for each area, use the space provided to list the program planning implications based on these needs.

Physical Development. Children in their school-age years are going through a great deal of physical change. Their bodies often look and feel differently from month to month. They need many opportunities to use, test, and refine their emerging physical capacities. During periods where growth is rapid, they may need additional support and reassurance to help them develop and maintain self-confidence and self-esteem.

**How This Should Influence Planning for School-Age Programs:**

Intellectual Development. School-age children are "hands-on" learners. They are naturally curious and enjoy using their minds to explore, investigate, and invent. As they mature, school-age children begin to develop the capacity for abstract thinking; they can think and reason about people, places, and ideas beyond the immediate present. They also have an increasing capacity for creativity and imagination and may ask a lot of "What if...." and "Why" questions as they develop this capacity. In the midst of developing new thinking capacities, they also become concerned with what is right and what is wrong--with developing a sense of morality. Sometimes their thinking can be very rigid while their thinking capacities are still growing and may find it frustrating not to have clear, simple answers to problems; they have trouble with "grey" areas. As their thinking capacities grow, however, they can approach problems and experiences with more flexibility.

**How This Should Influence Planning for School-Age Programs:**

Social Development. Changing physical and intellectual capacities interact with school-age children's need to enlarge their world beyond the family unit. They want and need to develop relationships with peers and adults outside the family, and connect with their communities. They are concerned about how other people see them and want to be liked and accepted, especially by close friends. Though friendships may be intense, they often do not last long. Related to their need for acceptance is a growing interest in being part of groups, clubs, and teams. Their developing sense of self-esteem can be strongly affected by the extent to which they are able to interact with others in a way which helps them gain acceptance. Older school-age children are increasingly interested in members of the opposite sex. However, this does not necessarily mean that they want to participate with them in games and activities. Throughout social development, a dynamic process goes on as children move back and forth between seeking independence and seeking the security provided by being a member of a group.

**How This Should Influence Planning for School-Age Programs:**

Emotional Development. Physical and intellectual changes and the pressures of an expanding social world create many new feelings for school-age children. During this period of change, they need help in identifying, understanding, and expressing these new feelings appropriately--to develop an internal confidence and comfortable center of self-control. Even though they have a genuine need for social acceptance and to have others appreciate their growing competencies, school-age children also have need solitude and privacy--a time and a place to relax and reflect where the pressure is off.

**How This Should Influence Planning for School-Age Programs:**

## Exercise 1 C: Child Care "Rights and Freedoms"?

Resources

Magic Markers
Chart Paper
Masking Tape

Time Needed for Group Work

20 - 25 minutes

Instructions

Read the scenario which follows. Then, discuss the questions on the next page.

**Child Care "Rights and Freedoms"?**

Early in the school year, a group of 5th and 6th graders came rushing up to the program leader of the school-age program with this demand: "We want to know what our **child care rights and freedoms** are; we've been learning about the Bill of Rights in school and we think there ought to be child care rights and freedoms, too." The program leader joined right in and said "You're probably right, let's talk about what they should be." The kids sat down with the leader and brainstormed seven rights and freedoms they thought they should have every day at the center. Here are the words they used to describe the rights and freedoms children should have in school-age programs:

1) "The right to **have fun.**"
2) "The right to **play with our friends.**"
3) "The right to **choose what we want to do.**"
4) "The right to **learn new things**--not just the same stuff we learn in school.
5) "The right to **be creative**--not just in art. We want to make up things--new snacks, new rules to old games, new inventions--stuff like that."
6) "The right to **privacy**--we need a place to put our things and place to be alone."
7) "Freedom **from bother**--we don't want other kids to ruin our stuff or teachers telling us what to do every minute."

Discussion Questions: Child Care "Rights and Freedoms"

1. How do you feel about the idea of children having child care "rights and freedoms"?

2. Based on your knowledge of child development, how do these "rights and freedoms" reflect the developmental needs of school-age children?

3. If you were going to plan a school-age program based on the child care "rights and freedoms" identified by these children, what would it look like?

Develop a summary of your answers to Question 3 and transfer it to the chart paper. You may want to use illustrations to help your summary come alive. Share and compare your summaries during large group discussion.

## Extension of This Exercise

Have a follow up discussion, using questions such as:

1. How did you feel about the way the program leader in the scenario responded to the children's "demand"? Was the response in tune with their developmental needs? Would you have responded in the same way? Would you have responded differently? Elaborate on your feelings.

2. What are some ways the program leader might use the list of "rights and freedoms" with children at the center?

3. How do you think the children in your program (or in your community) feel about their child care "rights and freedoms"? If you're not sure, how could you find out?

## Independent Learning Suggestions

Write down your answers to questions posed in the core exercise and in extension of the exercise. If possible, ask a co-worker to do the same. Share and compare your answers. Then discuss them with your supervisor.

## Exercise 1 D: Program "Response-Ability" to Individual Differences

Resources

Magic Markers
Chart Paper
Masking Tape

Time Needed for Group Work

1 to 1 1/2 hours

Instructions

(This exercise has two parts.)

### Part One: Tuning in to Individual Differences (30 Minutes)

Brainstorm a list of 30 celebrities/famous people from all walks of life. List them on the chart paper. Be sure that all the names on your list are familiar to everyone in your group.

Once you have a list of at least 30 celebrities, imagine that all of the people on your list have become school-age children again. And--imagine all will be attending a new school-age program you are planning. You know that programs must be based on the characteristic developmental needs of school-age children. However, as you look at your list of celebrity "children", it is probably evident that even if these children were all the same age, there would be many individual differences among them. To be successful with these "children", your program will have to consider their individual needs as well as the developmental characteristics they have in common as school-agers. Before you begin to plan your program, discuss the questions on the next page. Before your discussion, allow a few moments for each participant to make some notes in the space provided. Then share your notes and transfer those on which you agree to the chart paper. Your group will use these answers as a resource during **Part Two** of this exercise.

1. What individual differences exist among these "children"? Hint--some differences among people develop in relation to external influences like family upbringing or the type of neighborhood they live in. Others stem from inborn tendencies or traits--like body type, or temperamental characteristics like shyness or a child's activity level. Identify as many differences as you can. Be very specific. The more you know about the "children", the easier it will be for you to plan a program which will match their needs.

2. Which differences among these "children" may be difficult to respond to in a group setting?

3. Which differences among these "children" could be seen as resources that would enrich the program?

## Part Two: Developing Program "Response-Ability" (1 Hour)

Use your knowledge of the characteristic needs of school-age children and your assessment of the individual differences among your celebrity "children" to develop a profile of how a school-age program could be designed to meet their needs. Use the following questions to help you develop program "response-ability". Use the space provided for notes. Summarize the points on which you agree and transfer your summaries to chart paper. Present your list of celebrity "children", your assessment of their needs, and your program "response-ability" summaries to the larger group for review and discussion.

1. "Children" in your group probably have a wide variety of interests. Identify the interests they might have in common as well as those that are unique to certain individuals. Then, make a list of some ways your program could respond to these interests.

2. Based on the list you generated in Question 1, what kinds of space and program resources would be needed to support the interests of the "children"?

3. It is likely that the "children" in your group may have widely varying temperaments and personal styles. Review your list of "children" again with the following examples in mind:

   - Are some highly active, while others are more passive?
   - Do some appear to be adaptable and easy-going, while others seem to find it hard to make changes?
   - Do some seem to shy away from new people, places, and experiences, while others seem more out-going?
   - Do some seem tense and excitable, while others seem calm and steady?
   - Do some seem to have a tendency to act without thinking, while others seem to be reflective and plan ahead before acting?
   - Do some seem to be very persistent and have a tendency to keep on trying no matter how challenging a situation might be, while others seem to give up easily?
   - Do some seem especially sensitive to things in the environment like heat, light, sound, smell, or touch? Are there others who you think might not be very sensitive to stimuli in the environment? Along the same lines, do some seem to get frustrated easily or have their feelings hurt easily, while others seem like the kind of "child" who is not easily frustrated or hurt?
   - Do you think some of these "children" might find it hard to focus on what they are doing, while others might find it easy to concentrate no matter what was going on around them?

   These are some examples of temperamental differences in children; there are many possible variations between the extremes noted in the examples. Temperamental differences can have a powerful influence on the way children experience and respond to the child care environment. Because of this, it's important to anticipate these differences as we plan programs. With this in mind, look again at your group of children and list some examples of how the temperamental differences among them might influence the following aspects of your program:

   - Space:

   - Schedule:

- * Groupings (Small Group, Large Group, Independent Work and Play):

- * Staff Roles and Responsibilities:

- * Other Areas Your Group Identifies:

Share and compare your work with the larger group.

Extensions of This Exercise

1. In order to plan programs with children in mind, it's important to have as much advance information about the school-age children you will serve as possible. Develop a plan for obtaining information about the children you will serve. Consider conducting advance surveys or interviews of children, parents, or others who have information about the needs and interests of school-age children in your community. Joan Bergstrom's book, School's Out, Now What? (see Resource List) contains many lists that can be used by parents and school-age professionals to identify children's needs and interests. Also, review the SACC Survey and other questionnaires for caregivers which appear in the Supplementary Readings section of this guide. The questions in these forms can be used to gather advance information about children or to learn more about children who are already enrolled in programs.

2. In **Module Two**, you will have an opportunity to work on detailed planning exercises related to space, scheduling, and staffing. However, if you are interested in learning more about individual differences among children prior to doing the exercises in **Module Two**, consult the supplementary readings and worksheets on these topics which sollow the learning Modules in this guide. You will find the worksheets especially helpful if you are already operating a program; they are designed to help you gain a better understanding of the children you serve in order to better meet their needs. Some are designed to help you focus in on the individual needs of a particular child who may be having difficulty.

## Independent Learning Suggestions

Complete **Exercise 1 D** on your own or with a partner or co-worker if possible. If you are already working with a group of children, consider applying the questions directly to the children in your program, rather than doing the fantasy exercise with celebrity "children." Discuss the planning implications of your answers with a colleague or supervisor.

* * * * * * * * * * *

This concludes the exercises for **Module One**.

## Module Two

## Video Key #2:

## Organizing for Diversity and Choice

### Preview

Now that you have completed the exercises in **Module One**, you know that any group of school-age children will exhibit a wide variety of developmental and individual characteristics and needs. In view of this, programs structured in a way which requires all children to do the same thing in the same way at the same time will not be successful in keeping children interested and involved over time. On the other hand, programs designed around the idea that all school-age children have the skills needed to function with self-direction, self-control, and self-confidence in the face of overwhelming choices and stimuli usually disintegrate into chaos.

The diverse needs, characteristics, and interests of school-age children require a flexible atmosphere which supports diversity and choice for children with varying capacities for independent action. But flexible, diverse, informal programs don't happen accidentally. It takes careful planning, creativity, and organization to make this kind of program work. Children do not necessarily need to see evidence of every aspect of the program's underlying structure. But, an underlying structure should definitely be there. The human skeleton provides a useful analogy. Though it's not visible to the eye, it provides the framework which helps us function and move about in a coordinated fashion with flexibility, ease, and independence. The framework underlying a quality school-age program is similarly well-organized, yet flexible.

In this module, you will have an opportunity to develop specific plans for organizing programs which support diversity and choice for children with varying capabilities, needs, and interests. In many ways, school-age professionals in quality school-age programs function like highly skilled Air Traffic Controllers: They know who's taking off, who's coming in for a landing, who's in a holding pattern, who's running out of fuel, who's experiencing turbulence, who's having engine trouble, and who's been sitting on the runway much too long! These school-age professionals are well-organized and develop effective strategies for managing the environment with care, safety, and ease. The exercises which follow focus on three key areas: **Space, Scheduling**, and Staffing. Before proceeding with the exercises, review the portion of the video devoted to **Key #2**, paying particular attention to the summary graphics.

## Exercise 2 A: Using Available Space Effectively

Resources

Magic Markers
Scissors
Graph Paper
Ruler
Masking Tape and Scotch Tape
Chart Paper
Pencils

Time Needed to Complete This Exercise

1 1/2 to 2 hours

Instructions

Review the **Considerations for Setting Up Space in School-Age Programs** which appears below. (Your trainer may also show you the portion of the video which highlights the effective use of space.) Then, using the questions and guidelines which follows, design a center room which would support diversity and choice in a school-age program.

### Considerations for Setting Up Space in School-Age Programs.

In order to provide school-age children with opportunities to choose their own activities, quality programs for school-age children set up the space with a variety of areas which have furniture, equipment, and supplies related to a particular interest of school-age children. In this guide, these areas are referred to as "Interest Areas" (though in some programs they have other names). In choosing what interest areas to offer, it is important to consider the developmental and individual needs and characteristics of the children being served. Typically, quality school-age programs offer interest areas such as:

- **Board and Table Games Area** (for playing cards, board games, games like jacks, pick-up-sticks, dominoes, etc.)

- **Quiet Area** (for reading, relaxing, doing homework, talking quietly with a friend, listening to tapes using a headphone set, etc.)

- **Block and Construction Area** (for building structures with unit blocks, legos, Lincoln logs, etc. The area is usually stocked with miniature props like plastic people and animals for children to use with the structures they build)

- **Large Movement Area** (for dancing, rehearsing a play, holding clubs like gymnastics or aerobics, having a sing-a-long, playing indoor nerf ball games or cooperative games for large groups)

- **Sand and Water Table Area** (a soothing place where children can explore and experience these materials, especially appealing to younger children)

- **Dramatic Play Area** (for playing with props, equipment and furniture which stimulates imagination and role playing. While it is often set up as a housekeeping area, school-age children enjoy many other kinds of props for role-playing, especially those that allow them to try out different jobs or roles held by adults in the larger world they are beginning to experience)

- **Arts and Crafts Area** (for exploring a wide variety of arts and crafts materials and techniques. Many school-age children are ready to expand their art activities to include those that require small muscle coordination and skills such as calligraphy, wood carving, mask making, or water colors)

- **Science, Math, and Nature Area** (for collecting, categorizing, comparing, exploring, experimenting, investigating, and inventing, and testing out new thinking capacities)

- **Woodworking Area** (for exploring the properties of wood, developing and using small muscle skills, and making things that are beautiful as well as useful in the "real world")

- **Music Area** (for exploring the world of sound through listening, singing, dancing, making up songs, and playing instruments)

- **Project and Hobby Area** (for displaying and storing long term projects so they won't be disturbed or ruined--an ongoing chess game, a gardening project, a rock collection, etc.)

- **Snack and Cooking Area** (for preparing and serving daily snacks and conducting special cooking projects or clubs)

Interest areas make it possible for children to work and play on their own. These areas vary in size depending on the amount of space needed for furniture, equipment, and supplies and the number of children who are likely to use the area. Interest areas also vary in character and style--some are formal, others informal. Some feature soft items to create a cozy, comfortable atmosphere for a few children. Others provide more open space to encourage social interactions and active games for groups of children. Although school-age staff usually take the lead in establishing the basic interest areas, quality programs invite children's suggestions and participation in creating and changing these areas.

**The Task:**

Use the information presented in the video and the above overview to design a center environment which supports diversity and choice for school-age children. Follow the steps below.

1. In order to make the task relevant to your needs, select one of the following options for the type of center you will design (choose the option most like the environment you work in or are planning to operate):

   - A center which has its own space the size of an average elementary school classroom.

   - A center which has its own space and uses the equivalent of 2 or three elementary school classrooms.

   - A center which shares space such as a cafeteria, gymnasium, or multi-purpose room.

   - A center which shares space which is set up and used as classroom space during a portion of the day.

   - Any other type of space not listed above.

2. Draw a simple diagram of the space, indicating doors, windows, closets, sinks, outlets, and any other important features you will need to consider.

3. Analyze the space, using questions such as:

   - How large is it? Decide how many children you will plan to accommodate in the space.

   - How much storage space is available?

   - Are there some kinds of interest areas that will be difficult to house? If so, what adjustments could you make to cope with this difficulty?

   - What are the best features of the space? How can you make the most of them?

   - What are the worst features of the space? How can you work around them? How can you minimize them? (If the room is a lemon, what could you do to you make lemonade?!)

4. Decide which interest areas you want to provide. Define and develop each area in as much detail as possible. Be creative!!! Using a separate sheet of chart paper for each area, write down the following information:

   - Purpose of the Area
   - Furniture, Equipment, and Supplies Needed
   - Approximate Amount of Space Needed

5. Consider what functional areas you will need to have--storage, staff work areas, parent pick-up and information area, etc.

6. Using the graph paper and scissors, cut out shapes to represent the furniture, storage cabinets, rugs, and any other equipment you plan to have in each interest area and each functional area. Label each item with a pencil.

7. Using the shapes you've cut out, lay out a center environment in a manner which is flexible, well-organized, comfortable, attractive, and supports diversity and choice. Use the following guidelines to help you: (Note: If you are designing a room which uses shared space, you may also want to refer to the supplementary reading **Presto Environments in Shared Space** which appears in the last section of this guide.)

   - Be sure to separate quiet areas from noisy areas, active areas from more passive areas.

   - Be sure to store related items near each other (e.g. art supplies in the art area).

- * Try to use furniture and equipment in ways that will help define the space, rather than lining up everything against the wall. At the same time, be careful not to place furniture and equipment in the line of traffic or in areas where these items might easily tip over.

- * Be sure to locate areas needing water or electricity near sources of supply.

- * Try to find ways to give the center a comfortable atmosphere.

8. When you are sure of where you want to place each area, tape the items to the floor plan and label each area clearly.

When you have completed the task, share your plan for interest areas and center set up with the larger group and solicit their comments and suggestions.

Extensions of This Exercise

1. Make a list of ten activities which could take place in one of the interest areas you developed. Review books containing activity ideas if you need help getting started. School-Age Activities and Ideas and Half a Childhood contain many ideas (See Resource List). For each of the activities on your list, answer the following questions:

   - * What is the purpose of the activity? How will school-age children benefit from participating in this activity?
   - * Is the activity appropriate in view of the developmental needs of school-age children?
   - * What additional furniture, equipment, or supplies will you need, if any?

   Tip: The first question may be the most important one. If you don't have good answers for this one, forget about it! Further tip--beware of doing activities because you think they will "keep children busy". Although school-age children are industrious and like to be busy, they want to be busy doing things that really interest them--"busy work" for its own sake simply won't work!

2. When misbehavior occurs in school-age centers, the causes can often be traced to a mismatch between the needs of the children and the quality of the environment. Discuss this with your group or with colleagues. Generate examples of how a poor child care environment might cause conflicts and behavior problems.

3. Half a Childhood--Time for School-Age Child Care and Activities for School-Age Child Care (See Resource List) both contain extensive lists of the types of furniture, equipment, and supplies needed to develop interest areas which support diversity and choice. Use these books to help you generate ideas for developing additional interest areas.

4. Interest areas aren't just for indoors. It's important to plan for the effective use of outdoor areas as well. Discuss this idea with group members or colleagues. Then, using the same process as you used for planning the layout for your indoor space, develop an illustration of how you could use outdoor space effectively, complete with outdoor interest areas.

5. School-age children want to have a say in shaping the world around them. Discuss this developmental need with your group or with colleagues. Brainstorm ways you could make it possible for children to participate in the creation and maintenance of the center environment.

### Independent Learning Suggestions

If you are working alone, you will need more time to accomplish this learning exercise. You may also want to consult reading resources so that you do not have to come up with all the interest area ideas by yourself. Break the exercise down into several sections and work on it over a month or two, perhaps developing ideas for one or two interest areas each week. If you already work directly with children, don't forget to solicit their ideas and help on this project!

## Exercise 2 B: Developing Clubs Around Interest Areas

Resources

Magic Markers
Chart Paper
Masking Tape
Center Floor Plan Developed in Exercise 2 A

Time Needed for Group Work

30 to 45 minutes

Instructions

School-age children love to participate in club activities. Through clubs they have opportunities to develop social skills as they work in small groups. Clubs also provide children with opportunities to take an-depth look at new fields of interest and develop competencies which are useful at home, at school, and in the community. Sometimes clubs provide children with an introduction to activities that become life-long interests, hobbies, and vocations. School-age programs should provide a wide array of clubs to enrich children's experiences at the center. With this in mind, work with group members to develop clubs which could take place in the room arrangement you designed in Exercise 2 A. Use the guidelines below to help you plan.

1. This is a role play exercise: Pretend your group members are all children again. Each person should assume an age between 5 and 12.

2. Brainstorm a list of all the "children's" interests in the group. Note the interests the "children" have in common as well as interests which are unique to individuals.

3. Select three club ideas which could be developed around the identified interests of the "children". Place the name of each club at the top of separate sheets of chart paper.

4. Define and develop each club. Summarize your plans by completing the following list for each club. Transfer this list to the chart paper.

- State the purpose of the club, noting how it responds to the interests of various "children".
- List all furniture, equipment, supplies, and other resources you will need.
- Identify the interest area where the club will hold its meetings and note any changes that will need to be made to the area.
- Note how often the club will meet, how long each meeting will be, and how many times the club will meet.
- Note any potential problems with this club and how these problems could be solved.
- Describe how you will evaluate whether or not this club is a success.

5. Were you able to respond to the interests of all the "children" within these three clubs? If not, could the clubs be adapted or expanded in some way?

Share and compare your clubs with those developed by others in the larger group.

Extension of This Exercise

Review books containing club-related ideas on the Resource List at the end of the **Viewer's Guide.** A few of these are: Half a Childhood, School-Age Ideas and Activities, All the Best Contests for Kids, and The Activities Club Theme Guides featuring detailed ideas for organizing clubs around fourteen different themes of interest to school-age children. Also review the club ideas which appear in the supplementary readings section of this guide. Share these ideas with colleagues and with children at your center as you develop additional clubs for your program.

Independent Learning Suggestions

If you are currently working in a school-age program, use the guidelines presented in **Exercise 2 B** to develop three clubs which are directly related to the specific needs and interests of the children you serve. Be sure to involve the children in the planning process.

## Exercise 2 C: Developing a Schedule Which Reflects the Needs of School-Age Children

Resources

Magic Markers
Chart Paper
Masking Tape
Floor Plan Developed in **Exercise 2 A**
Club Plan Developed in **Exercise 2 B**

Time Needed for Group Work

45 minutes to 1 hour

Instructions

1. Review the floor plan and club plans developed in the first two exercises. Use the space below to list any other activities you think should be offered, but are not reflected in these plans:

2. Develop an after school center schedule which complements the floor plan, club plans, and additional activities listed above. Remember that the center floor plan you developed assumed a certain number of children. To plan a workable schedule, you will also need to identify the number of staff who will be available. Select a staff/child ratio which you think is realistic for programs in your area. Be sure the schedule takes into consideration the varying developmental and individual needs of school-age children. The goal is to create a schedule which is **organized to support diversity and choice.** Keep in mind the characteristics of schedules in quality programs which are highlighted in the video:

    - They are paced to meet the needs of school-age children.
    - They balance time for quiet and active periods.
    - They allow for changes in plans.

- They allow for simultaneous diverse activities.
- They allow for smooth transitions (from one activity to another and before and after routines such as arrival and dismissal, snacks, etc.).

As you do your planning, be sure to address the following:

- **what** activities will happen
- **where** activities will happen
- **when** activities will start and when they will end
- **who** will be responsible for activities that are taking place at each time and each place

**Remember:** everything doesn't have to start and stop at the same time.

3. Once you have agreed on the format for your schedule, record it on chart paper. Use any structure you prefer as long as it reflects the above guidelines and planning tips.

Share and compare your schedule with those prepared by other groups.

Extensions of This Exercise

1. Plan a before school schedule for the same center. As you plan consider the following questions:
   - What varying developmental and individual needs of children should be considered as you plan the before school schedule?
   - Should before school activities be different from after school activities? If yes, what are the differences. How will these differences affect the schedule.
2. Many programs offer full day programs during school vacations and holidays. With your group, discuss the following question: Other than length, how might the schedules for full day programs differ from before and after school schedules? For further information on full day schedules, consult Half a Childhood and School-Age Ideas and Activities (See Resource List).

Independent Learning Suggestions

If you are currently working in a school-age program, use the guidelines provided in **Exercise 2 C** to design a schedule which increases opportunities for diversity and choice for the children you serve.

## Exercise 2 D: Using Appropriate Staff Roles to Manage Center Activities and Events

Resources

Magic Markers and Pencils
Chart Paper
Masking Tape

Time Needed for Group Work

30 minutes

Instructions

The **Preview** of this module noted that school-age professionals often play a role similar to that of an Air Traffic Controller. The video introduces the idea that staff in quality school-age programs are good at playing many different roles. In fact, the more roles staff are able to carry out effectively, the better the program is likely to be. Follow the steps below to complete this exercise.

1. Do the first part of this exercise as individuals: Review the inventory of roles staff might play in school-age programs which follows these instructions. Then, using the space provided under each role, list the activities, events, and situations you think could be handled effectively and appropriately by using this role. List as many as you can.

   **Example:** Staff might assume the role of **Participant** during activities, events, and situations such as:

   - a kickball game
   - a group art project like painting a mural
   - a group discussion about favorite kinds of music or favorite movies
   - a guessing game
   - a play written by the children
   - a magic club led by one of the older children
   - a Spanish club led by an outside volunteer
   - a cooking project led by a visiting parent
   - and many more...........

**Hints:** Many different roles could be used for the same activity or event; there is not necessarily a "right" role to play. What is important to remember is that staff **have a choice** about the roles they will play. And the choices they make will influence the tone of the center and how children feel about the program. To be most effective, staff should decide what is the most important role to play during the activity, basing the choice on the needs, interests, and abilities of the children; the interests and abilities of the staff member; situation (e.g. will safety or health issues affect the role to be played?), the time of day, the space and facilities available, and what other staff will be doing at the time. This requires advance planning and organization. Remember, the goal for staff is to become skilled at using **variety of roles throughout the day** in order to offer a program which supports diversity and choice.

2. Convene your group and discuss the ideas of each group member. Consider the reasoning behind the matches selected between various roles and activities, events, and situations. Then, create and post a master list reflecting these ideas on the chart paper. Include any additional roles suggested by the group.

Share and compare your master list with members of the larger group.

Staff Role Inventory begins on the next page.

## Staff Role Inventory: School-Age Child Care Programs

| | ROLE | ACTIVITIES, EVENTS, AND SITUATIONS WHERE THIS ROLE COULD BE EFFECTIVE |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Leader | |
| 2. | Facilitator | |
| 3. | Helper | |
| 4. | Participant | |
| 5. | Problem Solver | |
| 6. | Mediator | |

(Staff Role Inventory, continued)

|  | ROLE | ACTIVITIES, EVENTS, AND SITUATIONS WHERE THIS ROLE COULD BE EFFECTIVE |
|---|---|---|
| 7. | Observer |  |
| 8. | Listener |  |
| 9. | Collaborator |  |
| 10. | Role Model |  |
| 11. | Other Role(s) Identified by the Group: |  |

## Independent Learning Suggestions

1. If you currently work with children in a school-age program, do one or more of the following exercises on your own:

   (a) Review the list of roles provided in Exercise 2 D. Ask yourself these questions:

   - Are there some roles I play more often than others? Do I play these roles too often? Or just enough?
   - Are there some roles I play rarely or never? Would it improve the program if I played these roles more often?
   - Which roles am I best at playing? Could I help others to play these roles more effectively? (For example, if you are good at the role of **Problem Solver**, could you share your techniques with children in a club or with colleagues in a staff meeting?)
   - Are there some roles I avoid because I don't have the skills to do them well? If yes, how could I develop the skills to the level I would feel comfortable using these roles?

   (b) Share the list of roles with a co-worker and/or supervisor. Ask them to use the list as a reference while they observe you in action on a regular basis over a period of several weeks. Then meet to discuss their observations of the kinds of roles you assume with the children, using the questions in 1 (a) above to focus the discussion. **Hint:** Be sure to invite someone you trust and respect to do this exercise with you. Otherwise, it may be difficult to discuss their observations.

   (c) Think of one **club**, one **activity**, and one **interest area** you would like to add to your center. Use the guidelines in **Exercise 2 C** to help you decide what role you would use to carry out each project. **Hint:** You might play different roles in different stages of each project.

2. If you do not work directly with children in a school-age program, do one or more the following exercises on your own:

   (a) Arrange to visit a school-age program in your community. Observe the roles being played by program staff as they interact with children, using the list of staff roles in **Exercise 2 D** as a reference. After your visit, ask yourself these questions:

- Are there some roles the staff played more often than others? Did they play these roles too often? Just enough?
- Are there some roles the staff played rarely or never? Would it improve the program if they played these roles more often?
- Which roles were the staff best at playing?
- Which roles did the staff have difficulty playing, if any? What would you suggest they do to improve their skills at playing these roles?

(b) If staff at the center are interested in learning more about how to use different roles to improve their program, arrange a meeting to share your observations and suggestions with them.

(c) If the program you observe is one you supervise, provide staff with advance information about the different staff roles. Show the **Key #2** section of the video to introduce the concept of staff roles. Then, follow up with an observation visit and discussion as suggested in 2 (a) and 2 (b) above.

## Exercise 2 E: Sharing Staff Interests and Skills with School-Age Children

### Resources

Paper and Pencil
Magic Markers
Chart Paper
Masking Tape

### Time Needed for Independent Learning

30 to 45 minutes as a workshop exercise
(**Note:** This exercise may be done as a homework assignment.)

### Instructions

The video illustrates that one of the characteristics of staff in quality programs is that they have interests and skills they like to share with school-age children. Sharing and caring go together naturally! With this in mind, complete the following exercise:

1. Think of a special interest, hobby, skill, or other activity you would like to share with school-age children.
2. Decide the best format for sharing it (e.g. Ongoing Club or Interest Area? Game? Presentation or Performance? One Day Special Event or Project? Etc.)
3. Using the ideas and information presented in **Module Two**, develop an outline of plan for sharing your interest with the children.
4. Transfer your notes to chart paper.

Share and compare your idea with other participants in large group discussion. Then, if you work with children in a school-age program, implement your idea as soon as possible!

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This concludes the exercises for **Module Two**.

Module Three

Video Key #3:

## Viewing Parents as Partners with Programs

### Preview

Strong, positive, cooperative relationships with parents are at the heart of quality programs for school-age children. Yet, these kinds of program/parent relationships are not always easy to achieve. Just as children have varying developmental and individual needs, so do parents. As the video illustrates, parents have different ideas, values, concerns, knowledge, pressures, lifestyles, plans, dreams, resources, and constraints. The one unifying theme among today's parents may be that many of them are stressed by the challenges of meeting their obligations in the workplace, while trying to build and maintain healthy relationships with the significant people in their personal lives. Some parents have more capacities and skills for handling this balancing act successfully than others. The extent to which parents feel that their lives are manageable and under some degree of control has a strong influence on the extent to which they are able and willing to get involved in their children's lives in the child care setting.

Quality programs make a genuine effort to understand and be supportive of parent concerns, problems, and stresses. They recognize that child care is a family service--that both parents and children are the clients or customers. They recognize that programs **are not** replacements for parents. Quality programs know that in order to succeed with children, they must constantly reach out to parents.

Before proceeding, review **Key #3** of the video. It provides an overview of **The Four A's of Parent Involvement**: 1) **A**cceptance, 2) **A**ssessment, 3) **A**ccommodation, and 4) **A**lliance. Programs which systematically address these **Four A's** have a much greater chance of increasing the level of parent interest and involvement in school-age programs. The exercises in this module are designed to help you design a plan for parent involvement based on these **Four A's**.

## Exercise 3 A: Accepting Parents as Partners

Resources

Exercise Instructions Only

Time Needed for Group Work

30 to 45 minutes

Instructions

Read the statements below and discuss how you feel about them with members of your group. More than likely, group members will vary in their opinions. Once you have shared your opinions about each statement, discuss the questions which follow.

1. Most parents today just don't seem to have time for their children. All they want to do is dump them in a day care center and forget about them. There's no way to get them involved in the program.
2. When parents don't seem to care about their children, someone at the child care center should try as hard as possible to be a substitute for the parent. After all, somebody needs to care!
3. Most parents aren't interested in quality programming. They just want to know how much it costs and how long the program will be open.
4. To a child, a parent is the most important person in the world.
5. Most parents really want to be part of their children's lives. They just don't seem to be able to make the time.
6. Many parents today don't seem to know a thing about raising children; as a result children are always misbehaving.
7. Low income families seem to know less and care less about what their children do in child care.

8. Parents have lots of good ideas about how a child care center should be run.

9. When children are having problems in child care, most parents don't want to hear about it.

10. Parents are a valuable resource for program planning.

**Follow Up Discussion:** Appoint one member of the group to facilitate discussion of the questions below. (The facilitator will summarize the group's discussion when the large group reconvenes.)

1. Which statements do members of your group disagree on? What accounts for any disagreements?

2. Are there any statements on which there is unanimous agreement? If yes, what accounts for this?

3. Identify any statements which members of the group have very strong opinions about. Then, discuss how these opinions might have an impact on a center's ability to develop a partnership with parents. For example:

   - Will any of the opinions enhance efforts to get parents involved? If so, how?
   - Will any of the opinions hinder efforts to get parents involved? If so, how?

4. During the discussion, did members of the group change their minds about any of their initial reactions to the statements? If yes, what accounted for the change?

5. Because we're all human, both parents and school-age professionals have values, beliefs, concerns, and traditions which influence our attitudes and color the way we look at each other. When attitudes get in the way of professional behavior, however, the situation usually goes from bad to worse. What can you do to cope with attitudes that may make it difficult to do your job effectively?

Share and compare your discussion of these issues with the larger group.

## Independent Learning Suggestion

If you work on your own, it can be difficult to see clearly how attitudes (both yours and the parents) may be influencing your interactions with parents. If possible, discuss the statements and questions in **Exercise 3 C** with a trusted colleague or supervisor.

## Exercise 3 B: Assessing the Needs of Parents

Resources

Magic Markers
Chart Paper
Masking Tape

Time Needed for Group Work

20 minutes

Instructions

Think about parents of school-age children in your community. As a basis for planning for parent involvement, discuss the following questions. Record your answers to each question on the chart paper.

1. What individual and group interests and needs are common to parents in your community?

2. What stresses, pressures, problems, or constraints face many parents in your community?

3. How much time do most parents in your community have to be involved in the school-age program? From your perspective, do most parents have quite a bit of time? A moderate amount of time? Almost no time to get involved? Does the amount of time parents have vary from parent to parent? If yes, what are some of the factors that contribute to this difference among them? What would be the best time(s) of the day, week, or year for parents in your community to become involved?

4. What special knowledge, talents, and abilities do parents in your community possess? Would parents be willing to share their talents and other resources with the school-age program?

Share and compare your assessments of the needs and interests of parents in your community with others when the larger group reconvenes.

## Extension of This Exercise

In **Module One, Exercise 1 A** required you to think about what school-age children want from programs by role playing their point of view. Try the same technique to help you get a new perspective on what parents want from school-age programs. In your group, have each member assume the role of a parent of a child between the ages of 5 and 12. Then, have a group discussion from the parents' perspectives. Structure the discussion by having each "parent" complete the following statement with as many answers as come to mind:

"I want a school-age program to........"

The "parents" might complete the statement with phrases like: "help my child with his homework", "teach my child some manners" or "keep my child out of trouble." Think of every aspect of school-age programs and try to come up with as many "parent" wants as possible. Record your responses on chart paper so that you can share them with others when you've finished the task.

**Remember:** This is a role play activity. Be sure each participant assumes a parent's role throughout the exercise. If you begin by saying things like: "Well, what I **think** parents want from a child care program is........", you will be seeing things from the perspective of a school-age professional--not from a parent's perspective. The purpose of this exercise is to think like a parent--to walk in their shoes for a few moments. Try to express yourself the way a parent would do--the more you talk like a parent, the more authentic your responses will be. When "parents" can't think of any more things they want the program to do, discuss the following questions as you review your list together:

1. Which items on the list would be easy to accommodate?
2. Which items on the list would be difficult to accommodate?
3. What are the barriers to accommodating various items on the list? What are some things you could do to overcome these barriers?
4. Do some items on the list conflict with what children might want? What school personnel might want? What school-age professionals might want? What could be done to resolve these conflicts?

Independent Learning Suggestions

1. Use the information in the video and the questions in Exercise 3 B to design a parent survey form to use in assessing the needs of parents in your community or school-age program. Try to design a form which will help you find out as much as possible about the parents needs and interests. At the same time, make the form as easy to read and as brief as possible.

2. Sometimes it's difficult to get parents to complete written surveys. After all, paper work is just one more thing to do! But, there may be other reasons as well. For example, some parents may not be able to read or write well. Other parents may not speak English at all. Try to think of some alternatives to written surveys for collecting information about parents needs and interests.

## Exercise 3 C: Accommodating the Needs and Interests of Parents

Resources

Magic Markers
Chart Paper
Masking Tape
Assessment of Parent Needs and Interests Completed in Exercise 3 B

Time Needed for Group Work

45 minutes

Instructions

Using the parent needs and interests your group identified in **Exercise 3 B**, develop a parent involvement plan for accommodating the parents. Remember, parents are as diverse as children. Parent involvement is most successful when a program recognizes that all parents do not have to be involved in the same way. The video stresses this point in **Key #3**. In developing your plan, elaborate on the following types of opportunities for parents. Put the title for each opportunity category at the top of one sheet of chart paper. If you think of another category, be sure to add it. Then list as many options as possible for providing opportunities in each area--give specific examples.

1. Opportunities to Talk with Staff
2. Opportunities to Receive Information
3. Opportunities to Help Shape the Program
4. Opportunities to Help Support the Program
5. Opportunities to Participate in Activities at the Center
6. Opportunities to Get to Know Other Parents and Children
7. Opportunities to Network with Other Parents with Similar Problems and Concerns

## Independent Learning Suggestion

Using the guidelines in for developing parent involvement opportunities in **Exercise 3 C**, work with a colleague or supervisor to develop a parent involvement plan for your school-age program or a school-age program in your community.

## **Exercise 3 D:** Building an Alliance with Parents of School-Age Children

### Resources

Situations

### Time Needed for Group Work

45 minutes to 1 hour

### Instructions

Read the Situations which begin on the next page, one at a time. Each of these Situations presents an opportunity to build an **Alliance** with parents. Discuss the questions at the end of each Situation with your group. Have one group member act as facilitator. The facilitator will summarize your answers and report on them when the larger group reconvenes.

In the larger group, compare your solutions to those developed by other small groups, noting any differences.

## Situations: Forming an Alliance with Parents

### Situation One

Several families at your center live in a low income neighborhood where most children are on their own when school is out. As a result of your community outreach efforts, these families decided to enroll their children in your center instead of leaving them in self-care. However, they are skeptical and have reservations about your program. They are not really sure that supervised care is necessary. They also wonder whether it's a good idea to trust their children to strangers who may not understand their values, family traditions, and attitudes about child rearing. A number of the parents who have concerns do not read or write. Some speak languages other than English. What can you do to gain the confidence of these parents and get them involved in some aspect of the center's program?

### Situation Two

A large number of children at your center come from single parent homes. Knowing this, you have tried to be supportive and understanding of the problems that face these families. One of these single parents has recently gone through a traumatic divorce and has been trying to complete her college education while holding down a full time job. As a result, she has several night classes and has no one to pick up her child from the center at the end of the day. She found out she lives in your neighborhood and asks you to give her child a ride home every day. Since her child really likes you, she also asks you to babysit in the evenings and on weekends. How will you handle the situation?

### Situation Three

One of the 5th grade boys in your center is always swearing and calling people names; sometimes he hauls off and slugs other kids for what seems to be no reason at all. He never seems to be in a good mood and often comes to the program wearing clothing that is either dirty or torn. When you mention his behavior to his grandmother who picks him up every day, she tells you that you just have to be firm with him. "He's always up to no good ever since his dad left--you just have to give him a swat when he acts up. That's what his mom does at home. Nothing else seems to work." What can you do to build a relationship with the grandmother in order to be helpful to the child?

## Situation Four

The father of Jamie, a 3rd grade boy at your center is an airline pilot and is frequently out of town for days and sometimes weeks at a time. Although Jamie's mother works hard to stay informed about center activities and her son's experience, Jamie often talks about how much he misses his father when he's away. What are some ways you could help this father be more a part of his son's life at the center?

## Situation Five

Many of the children at your center come from number of well-educated, upper-middle income families: college professors, lawyers, doctors, and corporate executives. Even though these parents are very busy, they are extremely interested in and anxious about what's happening at the center when they aren't there. They have constant questions and concerns about their children's day and how their children are growing and developing. Some of them also mention they have read reports about child abuse in day care and are nervous about these newspaper stories. What can you do to make sure these parents understand your program, have confidence in you, support your efforts, and get involved in positive ways?

## Situation Six

Several of the children at your center come from young two-parent families where both parents work and are struggling to make ends meet. The mother in one of these families is a graphic artist; the father is a sales representative for a sporting goods company. Although they work very hard at being successful, they always seem to be in a hurry. They also seem disorganized and unsure of themselves as parents. Their children sometimes complain that they had to leave home in the morning before they've finished breakfast. And because the parents are frequently late at pick-up time, the children often worry that something may have happened to them (to say nothing of the inconvenience this causes you). Since these parents usually rush in and out at pick-up time, you rarely have a chance to talk with them and you wonder whether they know or care much about what their children's life is like at the center. What can you do to provide appropriate support for these parents and their children? What strategies could you use to communicate effectively and form an alliance with the parents?

## Independent Learning Suggestions

1. Read the article **Keeping Parents Informed** which appears in the supplementary readings section of this guide. Then discuss the following questions with your group.

   - What skills do school-age professionals need in order to communicate effectively and form alliances with parents?
   - What can school-age professionals do to improve their communication skills--particularly the skills needed in difficult situations?
   - Why do you think it might be easier to talk about problems with parents if you have worked to build a relationship with them?
   - How do you think parent involvement differs from parent education? Can you think of ways a parent education program might help you develop stronger alliances with parents in your community or program?

2. Programs that want to keep parents informed usually develop effective brochures, newsletters, and bulletin boards. Select one of these communication tools and design a format you think would be attractive and effective in communicating to parents in your community. Have a colleague or supervisor critique your design. Then, ask a parent to give you some feedback before you complete the final version.

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This concludes the exercises for **Module Three.**

Module Four

Video Key #4:

Collaborating with Others Who Can Help

## Preview

Almost all school-age programs are housed in facilities which are owned and operated by another organization. Sometimes space is provided in elementary schools at no-cost or at a very low cost. In other cases, programs are located in facilities owned by churches, youth agencies, recreation centers, child care centers, or other community groups. In view of this, school-age professionals must develop the skills necessary to work cooperatively with others in contractual arrangements. They must develop a high level of sensitivity to the needs, concerns, and interests of those who provide them with space and services. They must also cultivate a spirit of creativity and flexibility. Above all, they need excellent communication skills. **Key #4** of the video highlights how important it is for school-age professionals to develop positive relationships with others who act as partners to school-age programs such as elementary school principals and support staff.

A second aspect of collaboration relates directly to the developmental needs of school-age children. Connecting with community resources is very important to children. School-age programs must develop strategies for helping children learn about and participate in community activities. There are two major ways this can be done: 1) children can participate in field trips which allow them to explore community resources at museums, parks, arts and recreation centers, business establishments, service organizations, etc., and 2) children can interact with people in the community who are willing to visit the center and share special talents, skills, and abilities. Either way, with resourcefulness and creativity, school-age professionals can develop collaborative relationships with many groups and individuals in the community who have resources to share with school-age children.

Before proceeding, review **Key #4** of the video which highlights the importance of collaborating with others who can help.

## Exercise 4 A: Looking at School-Age Care from the Perspective of Community Members

Resources

Magic Marker
Chart Paper
Masking Tape

Time Needed for Group Work

20 to 30 minutes

Instructions

We know that school-age children and parents have definite feelings about what school-age programs should be like. Community members also have opinions about how these programs should be operated--especially when they will be housed in their facilities. To collaborate effectively with these members of the community, it's helpful to look at things from their point of view. The following role play exercise provides a good vehicle for doing this.

Have each person in the group assume the role of someone in the community who might be involved in providing some level of support or space for school-age care. For example, you might assume the role of a school principal or headmaster, a member of the school support staff (the secretary, janitor, or school nurse), one of the classroom teachers at a school housing a program, or a facility manager at a youth, recreation agency, or church housing a program.

Next, have a group discussion from the perspective of the community members. Structure the discussion by having each "community member" complete the following statement with as many answers as come to mind:

"If a school-age center is housed in my facility, I want to be sure that.........."

Participants might complete the statement with phrases such as "the staff has things under control", or, "the children won't be allowed to go wild". Have one person in your group list your resposes on chart paper so that you can share them with others when you've finished the task.

Remember, once again this is a role play activity. Be sure each participant assumes the role of a community member. If you begin by saying things like: "Well, I think school principals would be concerned about.........", you will be seeing things from the perspective of a school-age professional, not from the perspective of the school principal or other community member. Remember, the purpose of this activity is to think like the people with whom you will be collaborating--not from your own perspective. Try to express yourself the way a school principal, school secretary, or agency director might do--the more you talk like a community member, the more authentic your responses will be. When "community members" can't think of any more things they want to be sure about, discuss the following questions as you review your list together:

1. Which concerns on the list would be easy to address?
2. Which concerns on the list would be difficult to address?
3. What are the barriers to coming to agreement about various concerns? What are some ways you could work to overcome these barriers?
4. Do some items on the list conflict with what children might want? What parents might want? What school-age professionals might want? What could be done to resolve these conflicts?

Be prepared to share your list of concerns and your resposes to the above questions during large group discussion.

Extensions of This Exercise

1. School principals may have goals for school-age programs which are different than the goals of school-age professionals. Discuss the following questions with your group: What accounts for these different perspectives? What could you do as a school-age professional to bridge the gap between the goals of the principal and the goals of school-age professionals?

2. Most school-age programs are "guests" in someone else's facility. Discuss the following question with your group: As a school-age professional, what could you do to make yourself and your program a welcome guest?

3. One of the advantages of housing a school-age program in a school facility is that it can provide continuity for the child's day. However, very often, school staff often see the child care program as "second class citizens". As a result, very little reciprocal communication takes place. Discuss the

following questions with your group: What can school-age professionals do to "up-grade" the image of school-age programs in a school setting? What can school-age professionals do to encourage increased communication between school and child care staff?

## Independent Learning Suggestion

Generate a list of initiatives you could take to improve the image of school-age programs with school personnel and other community leaders. Review the list with a colleague or supervisor. Select one or two initiatives that you agree could have the most positive impact on collaborative efforts and implement them as soon as possible

## Exercise 4 B: Developing Community Resources to Enhance School-Age Programs

Resources

Magic Marker
Chart Paper

Time Needed for Group Work

30 to 40 minutes

Instructions

1. Using the letters of the alphabet to get you started, make a list of community resources (people and/or places) that could enhance and enrich school-age programs. Identify at least one resource for every letter of the alphabet.

2. Evaluate the resources on your list. Select 5 resources which children might like to visit and 5 resources that could be brought to the center (a total of 10 resources).

3. Brainstorm ways in which each of the 10 resources could be expanded into ongoing clubs, interest areas, field trips, etc. Transfer the list of resources and ideas for expansion to chart paper.

Share and compare your list of resources with others in the larger group.

## Extensions of This Exercise

1. School-age children care about problems in their communities and in the world beyond their communities. They want to reach out and take positive actions to help those who may be in need. Identify individuals, groups, or organizations in your community that could benefit from some type of help, attention, entertainment, or assistance from school-age children. An excellent resource for ways children can volunteer to help others in their communities is The Kids Can Help Book (See Resource List). It contains descriptions of many volunteer projects and organizations for school-age children. Review the ideas in this book. Then talk with school-age children about ways they would like to contribute to their communities.

2. School-age children also like to learn about and help solve problems that affect the world community. The Kids Can Help Book (See Resource List) contains ideas and a list of organizations and ideas for helping the planet and helping people around the world. Share these ideas with school-age children in your program or consider and work with them to develop projects or clubs related to world issues that concern them.

3. Help school-age children learn more about their communities through a community bulletin board at the center. Set up the bulletin board in the quiet area and post articles and information of interest to children clipped from community newspapers. Encourage children to contribute articles they read at home. Consider forming a special club where children can discuss the articles and follow up on issues, projects, or activities which interest them.

4. Consider subscribing to several children's magazines for the center. Magazines are an excellent way to introduce children to people, places, and activities that it might not be possible to bring into the center or visit on a field trip. Contact the librarian in the children's section of your local library. The librarian can show you several current publications which contain descriptions and reviews of children's magazines on a wide variety of topics--hobbies, nature, travel, fashion, photography, writing, etc. Write down addresses for the ones you think would interest the children you know. Send for sample copies from the publisher and share them with the children so they can help make decisions about which magazines to order.

5. School-age children like to learn about how children live in other communities and in other parts of the world. Consider developing clubs such as:

   - A Pen Pal Club. Contact Around the World Friends, 550 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10036 for information.

   - A School-Age Child Care Partner Club. Talk with school-age children about other parts of your state or other states that interest them. Then, contact a resource and referral agency in that area to locate school-age programs. Invite one or two centers to exchange information, ideas, and ongoing letters between interested children. If children select an area of your own state or city which isn't too far away, consider arranging an exchange field trip between centers.

5. School-age children enjoy learning how to do things well--to do things that help them feel competent and confident. With this interest in mind, Joan Bergstrom has collected information about contests school-age children can participate in. In her book, All the Best Contests for Kids (See Resource List), she presents information about organizations across the country which sponsor contests for school-age children. She includes computer contests, writing contests, sports contests, sewing and cooking contests, photography contests and many, many others. This book can be used as a tool for helping children connect with children around the country who have similar interests and talents. Share the book with children in a school-age program and help them write letters requesting information from organizations which sponsor contests that interest them. Then, consider forming a club around the contest(s) that children want to pursue.

Independent Learning Suggestion

Contact agencies in your community which provide services for those in need. Find out if school-age children could provide some type of help or assistance to these agencies. If you work with children in a school-age program, talk with them about community needs and develop an action plan.

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This conclude the exercises for **Module Four**.

# Building on Your Progress:

# Supplementary Readings and Worksheets

This final section of the **Viewer's Guide for School-Age Professionals** contains supplementary readings and worksheets to help you build on ideas presented in the previous four modules. Although these readings and worksheets can stand alone, they will be especially helpful if used as suggested in the modules.

## PROGRAMMING THAT WORKS FOR OLDER CHILDREN

by Roberta L. Newman

Finding ways to get older elementary school children productively and happily involved in school-age child care programs is no small challenge. Children in 4th, 5th, and 6th grades have growing needs for independence and responsibility that often seem difficult to respond to in a group setting. But by looking closely at the characteristics and needs of older children, it is possible to design programs that will keep them enthusiastically engaged.

Researchers at the Center for Early Adolescence at the University of North Carolina[1] have identified seven developmental needs that should be considered in planning successful programs for older children. These needs often begin to emerge around age nine, when the child enters a rapid and often uneven period of physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth and development. Here are some "hands on tips" for meeting these seven developmental needs through program activities in child care programs. A set of related **Management Tips** to help you implement each list of **Sample Activities.**

1. The Need for Physical Activity. Except for the period of infancy, early adolescence is the most rapid period of physical growth in childhood. These children need lots of opportunities to exercise their growing bodies.

**Sample Activities**

* "Pick-up" basketball, baseball, soccer, etc.
* Ping-pong
* Pool
* Co-operative games
* Fitness and Aerobics Clubs
* Dancing and Movement (Informal and formal)
* Skating

**Management Tips**

* When explaining games, rules, etc., keep discussion short and to the point. If more lengthy discussion is needed for a more complicated activity, break up

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[1] The Center for Early Adolescence, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Suite 223, Carr Mill Mall, Carrboro, North Carolina 27510

the activity by alternating "talking time" with periods of physical movement.
- Allow for as much "hands on" work and physical movement as possible.

2. Need for Competence and Achievement. It is common for young adolescents to feel self-conscious and unsure of their abilities during this period of rapid growth. They need lots of opportunities to demonstrate to themselves and to others that they can do things well.

**Sample Activities**

- Clubs that help children learn and demonstrate new skills such as photography, gymnastics, karate, magic, cooking, sewing, carpentry, etc.
- Tutoring/study time to complete homework
- Learning CPR & First Aid
- Leading activities for younger children (e.g. teaching skills and rules used in various sports and games, teaching music or arts and crafts skills)

**Management Tips**

- Assess readiness for all activities, recognizing children's varying skill and ability levels.
- Be sure to teach skills required for all activities.
- Recognize achievements, informally and formally if appropriate.
- Offer support, understanding, and encouragement when children fail.

3. The Need for Self-Definition. Rapidly growing children need lots of opportunities to explore who and what they are becoming and how they relate to the world around them.

**Sample Activities**

- Cultural awareness activities such as ethnic history projects, cultural celebrations, local area or community history, traditions, geography, etc.
- Career related projects--special visitors from different fields (doctors, scientists, nature specialists, artists, newspaper reporters, radio "D. J.s", sports figures, etc.), career related field trips and clubs.
- Informal and formal drama activities that encourage children to explore a variety of new and different roles in a positive, non-threatening atmosphere.

**Management Tips**

- Encourage children to contribute diverse interests, skills, tastes, etc. as they work and play together.
- Provide opportunities for individualized activities.
- Be a positive role model who notices and appreciates that individual and cultural differences enrich life.

4. The Need for Creative Expression. As children's bodies and minds rapidly grow and change, they need lots of opportunities to develop an understanding and acceptance of themselves through creative expression of feelings, interests, thoughts, and abilities.

**Sample Activities**

- Painting, drawing, sculpting
- Weaving, macrame, potting
- Singing, acting, dancing, playing musical instruments
- Writing poetry and plays
- Gardening
- Producing video and audio tapes

**Management Tips**

- Provide opportunities for informal improvisation as well as formal presentations in the performing arts.
- Recognize sports as a means of creative expression and help children find ways to be creative in other areas such as science and math that are often not seen as creative or artistic endeavors.
- Provide resources for creative expression that relate to children's current interests and concerns.

5. The Need for Positive Social Interaction. Though the family remains of primary importance to older children, they need increasing opportunities to experience positive social relationships that allow them to explore emerging ideas, views, values, and feelings with peers and adult friends.

**Sample Activities**

- Informal small group discussion periods designed to stimulate discussion of ideas, concerns, problems, and feelings--"rap sessions".

- Club activities that provide opportunities for children to develop friendships and relationships through learning a new skill, exploring a new interest, etc. (E.g. Quilting Club, Joke Club, Clowning Club, Sports Clinics, Sign Language Club, Cheerleading Club, Babysitting Club, etc.).

**Management Tips**

- Plan activities that encourage and require collaboration.
- Help children develop communication techniques for handling social conflicts and problems. (Excellent resource--Creative Conflict Resolution by William J. Kriedler, available through NAEYC and School-Age NOTES Resource Catalog. Contains many ideas for facilitating positive group interaction and solving problems and conflicts through small group discussion, role playing, and games.)

6. The Need for Structure and Clear Limits. As older children grow in their need for independence and freedom, they also need the security of structure and clear limits to help them cope with increased responsibilities and new areas of exploration.

**Sample Activities**

- Group discussions, role plays, etc. that focus on developing positive group interaction and social relationships and the need for reasonable rules and limits. (Resource: W.J. Kriedler's Creative Conflict Resolution)
- Clubs that develop awareness of the need for structure and clear limits (e.g. Red Cross First Aid Club, Consumer Awareness Club, Bike and/or Water Safety Club, Survival Skills Club, etc.)
- Cooperative Games

**Management Tips**

- Be sure children understand the purpose of all activities.
- Always identify the specific tasks to be accomplished.
- Introduce more complicated activities and game rules and directions in small segments.
- Set time limits on activities in advance.
- Set clear space boundaries for activities.

- Set clear space boundaries for activities.
- Involve children in the discussion of acceptable behavior and get their input in setting rules and limits and consequences for inappropriate behavior. Then develop a short list of important rules and limits and post them in a visible spot. Review rules periodically to be sure they are still needed.

7. The Need for Meaningful Participation. The Center for Early Adolescence stresses that older children "need to participate in the activities that shape their lives." That is, they need opportunities to develop and use new talents, skills, and interests in the context of the real world.

**Sample Activities**

- Projects that benefit the community such as:
  - clean up/recycling campaigns
  - planting flowers, grass, bushes
  - creating murals or sculptures in school or other community buildings
  - creating centerpieces for school cafeteria tables or senior citizen dining halls
  - performing for nursing homes, hospitals, day care centers, etc.
  - collecting food or clothing for needy families or disaster victims

- Fundraising activities such as a car wash, bake sale or "mini craft mall" (sale of crafts made by the children). Proceeds can be used for field trips, special visitors, or additional games and equipment chosen by the children.

- Clubs that can help individual children learn skills that will make it possible to earn their own money (e.g. Babysitting Club, Craft Clubs like Tie Dye, Batik, Lawn Care and Gardening Club, etc.)

- Participation in national or regional contests such as writing contests, slogan and poster contests, etc. Excellent resource: All the Best Contests for Kids (See Resource List).

- Clubs that help children connect with others such as Pen Pal Clubs, Ecology Clubs, Travel Clubs, Community Awareness Clubs, Fan Clubs)

**Management Tips**

- Be sure to give children opportunities to participate in activity planning sessions. Avoid the pitfall of planning for older children instead of with them.
- Monitor older children's increased capacities for participating in long term projects and activities and plan accordingly.

**THE LAST WORD:** Even though one of the seven developmental needs may be the primary focus of any given activity, the most successful activities for older children are those which address most or all of the seven developmental needs at some level. With this in mind as you do your planning, ask yourself how each activity can be used to address as many of these needs as possible.

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## Activity Planning Sheet

Name of Activity/Club________________________________________

| Developmental Need | How the Activity Can Be Used to Meet the Need |
|---|---|
| 1. Physical Activity | |
| 2. Competence/Achievement | |
| 3. Self-Definition | |
| 4. Creative Expression | |
| 5. Positive Social Interaction | |
| 6. Structure and Clear Limits | |
| 7. Meaningful Participation | |

## OVERVIEW OF INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN TEMPERAMENT AND ATTENTION[2]

In addition to knowing about general **age group characteristics**, it's important to know something about individual differences in people. Individuals of **all ages have unique, in-born** characteristics that influence **how they experience** and respond to what's happening in their lives. Problems often occur when caregivers overlook **inborn traits** related to a person's **temperament** and **attention**. These characteristics powerfully influence the way people behave and should always be taken into account when planning programs and working with individuals.

**ACTIVITY LEVEL:** The amount of time the person usually spends in periods of activity compared to inactivity. Examples of Extremes:

- **Highly active** people find it hard to sit still or "stay put" for quiet activities.
- **Less active** people find it harder to "get going" and may prefer quiet activities.

**REGULARITY OF BODY RHYTHMS:** The regularity of the person's bodily functions and habits--eating, going to the bathroom, sleeping, waking, etc. Examples of Extremes:

- **Highly regular** people may find it hard to cope when routines don't fit their "internal clock".
- **Unpredictable** people may not have regular routines and schedules for eating, sleeping, etc. They may need reminders about when it's time to eat, rest, go to the bathroom, etc.

**APPROACH OR WITHDRAWAL:** The initial response of the person to new people, objects, and situations. Examples of Extremes:

- **Approach** people go toward new people and situations without hesitation.
- **Withdrawal** people hold back from newness.

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[2] Adapted from C.B. Liden, M.D. and J.R. Zalenski. Temperament and Attention: Neurobehavioral Contributors to Individual Differences in Development, Behavior, and Health. Pittsburgh, Pa.: TRANSACT Health Systems, Inc.; 1992.

**ADAPTABILITY:** The ease with which the person adapts to changes. Examples of Extremes:

- **Easily adapting** people can "go with the flow" and are more independent.
- **Slowly Adapting** people have trouble adjusting to new routines and expectations.

**PERSISTENCE:** The amount of time a person gives to an activity. Examples of Extremes

- **Long Persistence** people stick with things for long periods of time, even when there are difficulties.
- **Short persistence** people tend to give up easily.

**INTENSITY:** The energy a person uses in making a response. Examples of Extremes:

- **High Intensity** people have extreme emotions which can make it hard for them to learn, communicate, or finish a task.
- **Low Intensity** people tend to be "low-keyed"; their emotions don't get in their way.

**SENSITIVITY TO STIMULI:** The intensity of stimulation it takes to get a response from the person. Examples of Extremes:

- **Highly Sensitive** people are easily affected by things in the environment--light, heat, sound, etc., and often become easily frustrated, excited, angered, etc.
- **Less Sensitive** people aren't as affected by stimuli in the around them and are less emotional about things.

**MOOD:** The amount of friendly, pleasant, joyful behavior as opposed to unpleasant, unfriendly behavior during a day. Examples of Extremes:

- **Positive** people often attract others and have good social, communication, and independent learning skills.
- **Negative** people are often less independent with poor social skills which can lead to isolation.

**THINKING TEMPO:** This relates to whether a person is more impulsive or reflective in doing things. Examples of Extremes:

- **Impulsive** people tend to act first and think later.
- **Reflective** people spend lots of time "thinking things over" before doing things.

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**DISTRACTIBILITY:** The extent to which a person can focus on a task when faced with stimuli unrelated to the task. Examples of Extremes:

- * **Highly Distractible** people find it hard to focus in and stay with what they're doing.
- * **Less Distractible** people tend to focus in, use time well.

## WORKSHEET--LOOKING AT SPECIAL NEEDS IN SACC

### Nine Dimensions of Temperament and Other Factors That Interact to Affect Behavioral Style

| Dimension of Temperament | Sample Program Areas to Consider | * Other Related Factors to Consider | Program Adjustments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Activity Level<br>Range: High - Low | - Group Time<br>- Transitions<br>- Nap Time<br>- Room Arrangement<br>- Activity Offerings<br>- Free Play Time | | |
| 2. Regularity (Predictability of patterns of sleep, appetite, etc.)<br>Range: Regular: Irregular | - Arrival and Release Time<br>- Center Schedule<br>- Center Routines (Snack, Nap, etc.)<br>- Schedule<br>- Schedule Changes | | |
| 3. Approach/Withdrawal (Initial Response to Newness)<br>Range: Approach - Withdrawal | - Group Activities<br>- Special Visitors and<br>- Free Play<br>- Special Groupings (Clubs, Skill Groups Mixed Age Groups)<br>- Performance Activities<br>- Change in Pick-Up Person | | |
| 4. Adaptability (Accommodate Change)<br>Range: Fast - Slow | - New Teacher<br>- New Room Arrangement<br>- New Groupings(s)<br>- New Schedule, Procedures<br>- Transitions, Routines | | |

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* Examples: Readiness, Attention, Stresses, Physical Constitution & Health, Attitudes, Expectations of Self and Others, Temperaments of Others

| Dimension of Temperament | Sample Program Areas to Consider | Other Related Factors to Consider | Program Adjustments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5. Level of Sensory Threshold<br>(What It Takes to Get a Response--Sensitivity to Light, Sound, etc.)<br>Range: High - Low | - Activity Offerings<br>- Groupings<br>- Room Arrangement & Design<br>- Level of Stimulation<br>- Type of Sports & Games<br>- Temperature<br>- Groupings | | |
| 6. Intensity of Response<br>(Energy of Response, Loudness, Movement)<br>Range: High - Low | - Teacher Role & Style<br>- Center Rules & Limits<br>- Groupings<br>- Level of Stimulation<br>- Procedures for Playing Games, Transitions | | |
| 7. Quality of Mood<br>Range: Positive - Negative | - Activity Offerings<br>- Room Arrangement & Design<br>- Quality of Relationships<br>* Child/Teacher<br>* Child/Child | | |
| 8. Distractibility<br>Range: High - Low | - Free Play/Free Choice<br>- Room Location, Arrangement/Design<br>- Activity Offerings<br>- Environment for Presentations/Announcements/Performers<br>- Groupings/Relationships | | |
| 9. Persistence<br>Range: Long - Short | - Schedule of Activities<br>- Diversity & Complexity of Activities<br>- Groupings<br>- Teacher Role | | |

## PROBLEM SOLVING DIFFICULT SITUATIONS IN SCHOOL-AGE CENTERS

### Tommy

Tommy is a 6 year old boy who is very active. He can't sit still during group time announcements and has difficulty staying with quiet activities for any length of time. He frequently "clowns around" and acts out while the teacher is talking, making the other kids laugh and join in with his antics. Tommy rarely listens when the teacher gives directions or reviews safety rules. When he plays, he plays with intensity, often impulsively breaking toys, ruining supplies, etc. He has a difficult time working or playing on his own, so he spends his free time bothering other kids who are productively involved in their own activities.

Notes:

### Cindy

Cindy is a rather shy 10 year old girl who seems to be at loose ends at the school-age center. She is much taller and more mature than the other children and seems very concerned about her appearance and grooming. Cindy never seems to want to do any of the planned activities and stubbornly resists participating. While other children play group games outside, she turns cartwheels nearby or sits under a tree, digging aimlessly in the dirt. While others are engaged in free choice activities, she wanders around the room and says she isn't interested in the choices available or in the other kids--she's more interested in talking to the teachers.

Notes:

## Jason

Jason is an 11 year old boy. He's very athletic and skilled at playing many sports. Both mom and dad are real proud of him and have encouraged his participation in many competitive activities. He's popular with other boys because of his athletic ability. They see him as a leader and role model. In response to these boys, the center offers a lot of competitive sports and games. To encourage team spirit, in fact, the teacher usually rewards the winning team by letting them choose the snack menu for the next day or select the next set of center activities. However, trouble often breaks out during competitive games--and Jason (also known as "Mr. Hot Head") is often the instigator. During baseball games, for example, he gets very angry when he strikes out or when he's called out running around the bases. He almost always argues and throws a temper tantrum when things don't go his way. He screams, swears, calls people names, sometimes throws a bat or ball at the teacher or other kids who are acting as "umpires." He is very resistant when the whistle blows and it's time to leave the playground--sports are "his thing" and he doesn't want to change to doing something else. Even though Jason excels at sports, it seems impossible to have a smooth day on the playground or in the gym when he's around.

Notes:

## The Older Group

A school-age center serving 60 children divided children into three age groupings for after school activities. Twelve 5th and 6th graders were assigned to Ms. Baker who was responsible for programming for older children. Ms. Baker had been a classroom teacher the year before and felt confident she knew what older elementary kids liked. She spent many extra hours of preparation before the school year began--decorating and setting up the room and designing a month's worth of daily activities. Many of the activities were art projects which could be done in a half an hour of time. She devised a schedule that began each day with a group time where she could make general announcements about activities to be offered for the day--two choices were always available. After activity choice time, Ms. Baker planned for her group to join the younger children for sports and games in the school gym or outside. Following sports and games, her group would return to their room for free time or homework for about 1/2 hour before parents would arrive.

After the program was in session for one week, Ms. Baker was shocked to find that the 6th graders were not at all interested in what she had planned for them. They resisted choosing either arts and crafts alternatives and wanted to spend their time gossiping and joking with each other. Some just wanted to do homework--because that's what their parents expected. They were also angry about having to join the younger children for sports and games. Most of the children in Ms. Baker's group were girls and somehow she had always thought of older girls as being polite and friendly--but the opposite was true. They barely said "Hello" when they entered the center room and during group announcement time, they either ignored her entirely or were constantly interrupting her--with rude comments, giggles, or playing with some object they had brought from home. Sometimes they intentionally ruined posters and displays she had put up around the room. In short, all of the plans Ms. Baker had made for her group didn't seem to be working.

Notes:

## The Little Rascals

Three 3rd grade boys have turned the child care center upside down. During group time, they wrestle with each other and often pick fights with other children. Often they mimic the teachers and this gets lots of laughs. During free play time, they are a disastrous team. They briefly try activities, but then give up and roam around disrupting groups of children-- destroying projects, starting fights, and doing everything they can think of to call attention to themselves--one day the teachers found them trying to "escape" by crawling out the window! They are completely out of control.

Notes:

## Julie

Julie is a shy 5 year old who has never been to child care before. Until now, she has always been at home with her mom--but this year several new things have happened to Julie. She started kindergarten, mom and dad have gotten a divorce, and mom also has gone to work. When she comes to child care, all she does is talk about going home. She is very anxious about whether her mom will pick her up on time and often sits by herself crying. When the teacher tries to bring her in to group activities, she cries even more--sometimes so loudly that it's both distracting and upsetting to the other kids.

Notes:

### Bobby

Bobby is a 7 year old who made it clear the first day at child care that he didn't want to be there. He told the teacher and the other kids that he wants to be left alone and that he doesn't want anybody to touch his things or play with him. Bobby is big for his age--he takes after dad who is very athletic looking and about 6'6" tall. Bobby really identifies with his dad who travels a lot. The teachers notice that Bobby's worst days are those when dad is out of town and mom is the one who brings Bobby to SACC and picks him up. While Bobby and dad are very close; mom and Bobby seem distant with each other. Bobby is very cool to mom and also resists any friendly gestures from the teachers and the other kids. When the kids try to play with Bobby or move through "his space", he becomes angry very quickly--often slugging people or throwing blocks or other toys at them. When the teachers talk with him about his behavior, he cries and says he is sorry. He just doesn't seem to be able to think before he acts. The teachers are really afraid that unless Bobby gets control of himself, somebody is going to be seriously hurt.

Notes:

## Questions to Help Caregivers Respond to Individual Differences:

Conflicts are often a result of a mismatch between the child's unique characteristics and behavioral style and the expectations of the environment. Here are some **key questions** that will help you understand more about the unique temperamental characteristics of a child in your care. When you are more aware of these characteristics, you can be a more effective caregiver.

- How active is this child? What's the best way to respond to his/her activity level?
- How regular are this child's bodily habits most of the time? What's the best way for me to respond to his/her eating, bathroom and other habits?
- What is the child's first reaction to new people and situations? What's the best way for me to respond to his/her tendency?
- How adaptable is this child? What's the best way for me to help him/her get used to things?
- How persistent is this child? Are there special things I can do to help the child keep on trying if persistence is a problem? Does the child have trouble focusing attention on what's going on? If yes, what can I do to make it easier?
- Is the child especially sensitive to light, heat, noise, pain, touch, etc.? Is he/she easily overstimulated? If yes, are there program adjustments that should be made to accommodate this sensitivity?
- Is the child intense in responding to people and things that happen--easily upset or excitable? If yes, how can I anticipate potential problems? What helps him/her calm down when he/she becomes upset, fearful, very angry, etc.?
- What is the child's general mood? What's the best way for me to respond to any extremes in his/her mood?
- Does the child tend to be impulsive--does he/she act before thinking? Or does he/she tend to over-think things? What's the best way for me to respond to his/her tendency?

## ANTICIPATING POTENTIAL PROBLEMS AND CONFLICTS RELATED TO TEMPERAMENT IN INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN

To help you anticipate how an individual child you are concerned about in your program might react in different situations, ask yourself the following questions. Place a (*) by any that would concern you and talk with colleagues about how you could be of help to the child.

a. Your child's parents have not arrived by 6:00 P.M., although they usually come by 5:15 P.M. Your child will:

b. You announce free play is over and your child is in the middle of his/her favorite game. Your child will:

c. The group has finished playing an exciting kickball game on a hot day and you want everyone to come inside and calm down. Your child will:

d. You are showing children how to play a new game and your child can't seem to get the hang of it. Your child will:

e. You call a group meeting to talk about safety rules before going on a field trip. Your child will:

f. You ask a small group of children to wait around a table while you get out the art materials for a project you are responsible for leading. Your child will:

g. You have gone on a hiking field trip. Your child is wearing new shoes that aren't broken in yet. Your child will:

h. A substitute teacher has come to take over your group for the day. Your child will:

i. You have been planning all week to go on a field trip to the zoo, but it's raining, so you're going bowling instead. Your child will:

j. The group has been told that no one can have snack until everyone is sitting quietly. Your child will:

k. The bus has stalled on the way to the swimming pool and no one knows when a replacement bus will arrive. Your child will:

l. You have gathered the group for a magic show by a special visitor. The visitor is late. Your child will:

m. You call your group in from the playground to have snack earlier than usual. Your child will:

n. Your child joins the program several days after everyone else has been coming. Your child will:

o. No one is available to greet your child at the beginning of the day. Your child will:

p. Two 4th grade boys have started a wrestling match in the hallway while you have gone to get the soccer ball and other equipment to use outside. Your child will:

## SACC CENTER INTEREST SURVEY

We want to know more about you so that we can be sure to plan center activities that are fun and interesting to you. Please fill out this survey to help us make our SACC center a great place to be! Thanks!

### MULTI MEDIA

### Movies

What are your favorite kind of movies? Adventure? Science Fiction? Drama? Comedy? Horror?

Who are your favorite movie stars?

If you could choose to be one movie star for a day, who would you be?

Which do you like best? Short films or cartoons?

What G or PG rated movies would you like to see in SACC?

### Music

What radio station(s) do you listen to?

Who are your favorite musicians or bands?

Do you like to dance to music?

Are there any records or tapes you would like SACC to buy for the center?

Do you sing or play a musical instrument? If yes, would you like to perform for the SACC kids? For the parents?

Is there a musical instrument you would like to learn to play?

### Books/Magazines

What kinds of books do you like to read? Non-Fiction? Adventure? Comedy? Science Fiction? Other?

Are there books you would like us to check out for you from the library? If yes, which ones?

Do you read comics? If yes, which ones? Do you have a favorite comic strip?

What magazines do you like to read? Are there any magazines you would like SACC to subscribe to?

## Television

What is your favorite T. V. program?

Do you have a favorite T. V. game show that you would like to play in SACC? If yes, what is it?

## CLUBS/ONGOING PROJECTS

### Projects

Do you prefer doing activities that are short (30 minutes to an hour) or would you like to be involved in more activities that last longer (activities that can be continued the next day)?

Do you like to work on projects you can complete and take home the same day or do you like to work on projects for several days?

Do you prefer doing projects by yourself? With one or two friends? Or in a group of five or more?

### Clubs

Check any of the following clubs you like to be in at SACC:

_____ DRAMA (prop making, set designing, acting, creating costumes, producing a play)

_____ PHOTOGRAPHY (experimenting with different kinds of cameras made in the club, learning techniques of better picture-taking)

_____ SEWING CLUB (learning to embroider, cross-stitch, needlepoint, making a finished product to take home)

_____ MACRAME CLUB (learning different techniques of knot making, making a wall hanging, plant holder, or piece of jewelry)

_____ WEAVING CLUB (making different kinds of looms, completing small projects and a large woven masterpiece!)

_____ NUTRITION CLUB (learning healthy ways to eat and stay fit: aerobics, preparation of tasty and healthy foods, dental hygiene, etc.)

_____ AEROBICS (Floor and movement exercises, making up routines)

_____ CAMPING CLUB (learning about wilderness survival skills, learning how to tie different kinds of knots, going on nature hikes, possibly going on an overnight camping trip)

_____ OTHER IDEAS? ______________________________

Drama

Would you like to perform a play or a skit for the younger children? For the parents?

Are you interested in puppets? If you are, would you like to make different kinds of puppets?

Would you be interested in performing a puppet show?

Art

Place a check by any of the art activities below that interest you or that you would like to learn to do:

_____ Tie-dying
_____ Papier-Mache
_____ Decoupage
_____ Coiling, Basketry
_____ Macrame
_____ Sculpture
_____ Sewing
_____ Weaving
_____ Others (Please list)
______________
______________

What is your most favorite art project?

Games/Puzzles

What is your favorite board game?

What board game would you like SACC to have that we don't have?

Do we have a board game in SACC you don't know how to play? If yes, what is it?

Are you interested in doing an ongoing jigsaw puzzle of 500-1000 pieces?

What is your favorite active game to play?

Would you like to learn new gym games with more complicated rules?

Do you enjoy tournaments?

Do you enjoy games where everybody wins?

## Cooking/Food

Do you like to cook?

If you could cook anything for snack, what would it be?

## Building

Do you like to work with wood, a hammer, nails, etc.?

Would you like to build a group project like a fort or a robot?

Are you interested in building models?

Do you like to carve or whittle?

What other kinds of things would you like to build?

## Science/Nature

What is your favorite nature project?

What is your least favorite nature project?

Do you like to grow plants?

Do you like to take nature hikes?

Do you like to use the microscope?

Check any of the following you would like to learn more about:

_____ Weather (weather patterns, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, etc.)
_____ Astronomy (study of the stars)
_____ Geology (study of rocks and gems)
_____ Solar System (study of planets and the galaxy)

## MISCELLANEOUS

### SACC Changes

If you could be a SACC teacher for a day, what art or game activities would you do?

What is one thing we have not done in SACC that you would like to do?

Which of the following things is your favorite activity in SACC? (Circle it)

Listening to music    Free Choice Outside    Active Games

Free choice play inside    Playing in Housekeeping

Art activities    Science Activities    Other:____________

If you could change something in SACC, what would it be?

### Weekend Outings

What do you do on Saturday and Sunday?

What is the most favorite local place you have gone with your mom or dad?

Would you be interested in taking a couple of weekend days to go to a museum or park in the area with older SACC kids?

### School Subjects

What are your most favorite and least favorite school subjects?

What do you like to do most in school?

---

### Special Visitors

**Do you like it when we have special visitors in SACC?**

**Who would you like to come visit SACC as a special visitor?**

**Tell Us More. . . . . . . .Are there other ideas you have to make SACC more fun that we haven't asked about?**

**(Prepared by teachers in the Fairfax County Office for Children's School-Age Child Care Program, Fairfax, Virginia. Ed. by American Child Care Foundation, Inc.)**

## ONGOING CLUBS AND PROJECTS FOR OLDER CHILDREN

| | |
|---|---|
| Gourmet Cooking | A different food is prepared at each session, including Chinese/Quick Wok, Pizza, Hors d'oeuvres, etc. The kids learn to set an appropriate table and eat the prepared foods. |
| Color My Image | Hair, skin, nail care, and application of make-up is presented. Fashion, poise, and proper etiquette can also be included. The club ends with a fashion show and demonstrations presented by the kids. |
| Clowning | Kids learn about the personalities, wardrobe, and make-up of different types of clowns. They learn and practice juggling, magic tricks, and improvisational skits. (These skills can be used by the kids to earn money by performing at birthday parties, etc.) |
| Volley Ball Clinic | The club presents techniques and skills of volley ball. Sessions focus on skill building activities as well as team games. |
| Cheerleading | Movement, dance, gymnastics, and tumbling skills are presented. Participants practice these skills and use them to create, perfect, and perform several routines. |
| Pottery | Various methods of handbuilding with clay are demonstrated. Each participant designs and completes a pot or sculpture using the coil, slab, or pinch methods. |
| Babysitting/Child Care | The Red Cross offers a mini course about babysitting, including important points to remember, safety guidelines, etc. The kids receive a certificate and prepared written material to keep upon completion of the course. |

(Clubs/Projects for Older Children, continued)

## ADDITIONAL CLUB/PROJECT IDEAS

### Cooking

- No Bake Foods
- Bread Baking
- Cake Decorating
- Canning and Preserving Fruit/Making Preserves

### Sports

- Badminton
- Martial Arts, Karate
- Jump Roping/Double Dutch
- Table Tennis
- Skate Boarding
- Gymnastics and Stunts
- Tumbling
- Sports Clinics
  - basketball
  - soccer
  - field hockey
  - baseball
- Fitness and Aerobics
- Dancercize

### The Performing Arts

- Acting/Theatre
- Puppetry
- Dance (pop/current styles)
- Sing-A-Long/Lipsynching

### Crafts

- Drying and Preserving Flowers
- Paper Mache Projects
- Print Making
  - linoleum block
  - woodcut
  - silk screen
  - found objects & scrap materials
- Mask Making
- Stenciling
- Tissue Paper Projects
- Candle Making
- Batik and Tye-dying
- Woodburning
- Leatherwork
- String Art
- Holiday Crafts

### Stitchery

- Quilt Making
- Weaving
  - card
  - loom
- Embroidery
- Needlepoint
- Knitting
- Crochet
- Rug Making
  - latch hook
  - punch hook

### Miscellaneous

- Consumer Awareness
- Community Involvement Projects
- Lawn Maintenance
- Newspaper
- Card Players
- Chess
- National Geographic/Travel
- Camping/Survival Skills/Orienteering
- Pet Care
- Project Wild (Nature Games & Exercises)
- Paper Airplane
- Model Building
- First Aid
- Sign Language
- Computer

American Child Care Foundation, Inc.
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## PRESTO ENVIRONMENTS IN SHARED SPACE:

### HOW TO MAKE THEM WORK FOR SACC

Many school age child care programs are housed in shared space in preschools, churches, YMCA's/YWCA's, community buildings, and public schools. The type of space used may be a classroom, multi-purpose room, gymnasium, or a cafeteria. Even though shared space is used, children attending after school programs need a home base area which is relaxed, homey, inviting, attractive, interesting, and functional. Above all, an after school program environment should make children feel as if it's designed for them while they're using it--even if the space is used for other purposes before and after program hours.

### Where to Begin Your Planning

Sharing space will have an impact on several program areas: activities, equipment, and room arrangement. Before you move in and set up (or before you give up on the possibility of creating some "atmosphere" in shared space!), take time to gather information about your primary shared space area as well as other building facilities that may be available. Putting together answers to the following questions should help you as you begin planning how to use shared space as effectively as possible:

* How many children will the program serve?

* What type of space be shared?

* What other groups will be using the space? When?

* What arrangements can be made for regular and direct communication between the different groups using the space?

* Will some program equipment be permanently set up or must everything be stored away on a daily basis?

* Will there be access to a storage area? If so, how large is it? How close is it to the primary space to be used for the program? Can it be locked?

- What kind of furniture, equipment, and supplies will already be set up in the space, if any?
- What is the size and shape of the space? Where is it located in the building? (Prepare a floor plan to use as you think through how to use the space.)
- What types of activities will your group do in the shared space?
- Will the program have use of other areas of the building? If yes, what activities can take place in these areas? What kind of storage is available in these areas, if any?

Once you have the answers to these questions, you are ready to consider some of the equipment options that can help you use your space effectively.

## How to Identify the Best Furniture, Equipment, and Supplies for Use in Shared Space

More than likely, programs that operate in shared space will need to create, set up, and take down environments on a daily basis. Certain types of furniture and equipment lend themselves to being set up, taken down, moved around, and stored away with relative ease in a short amount of time. It's important, then, to carefully identify and select items that lend themselves to use in shared space.

The following list of suggested furniture, equipment, and supplies will help you plan a "presto" environment that is functional, attractive, comfortable, and stimulating. For each item listed, you will find a description of the characteristics that makes it suitable for use in shared space. You will also find a list of possible uses for each item. Some of the items listed are more portable than others. Use the answers to the questions listed earlier to help you decide which items would work best in your space. All of the items listed can be purchased commercially. However, low cost "home-made" versions of some of the items could be made by a volunteer with basic carpentry skills.

## FURNITURE, EQUIPMENT, AND SUPPLIES FOR USE IN SACC PROGRAMS THAT SHARE SPACE

| Item | Description | Uses |
|---|---|---|
| BASIC FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT: | | |
| Tables | * rectangle (3'x 6' or 3' x 8')<br>* round<br>* fold out type<br>* wooden with wheels<br>(select only those that are both sturdy _and_ light weight) | * work area for projects and activities<br>* space for playing board and other games<br>* place to display projects<br>* administrative area for staff<br>* counter top type space for audio visual and other equipment<br>* storage area under table (when table can be covered to camouflage items being stored) |
| Chairs | * stacking on base with wheels<br>* folding | * definition of areas for relaxation and work<br>* area for coats, books, and personal belongings |
| Shelves | * wooden with pegboard on wheels<br>* open-up cabinet type<br>(select those with 2, 3, 4, shelves, avoiding higher units) | * borders to define and contain related supplies for interest areas<br>* room dividers (with backs covered attractively with sturdy material that does not tear easily when moved)<br>* storage area for teacher supplies, facing open shelves to wall or covering them with a curtain |

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| Cabinets | * wooden on wheels<br>* metal on rolling base<br>(select those with built-in or attached lock) | * storage space for supplies<br>* room divider<br>* display board (front or back) |
| Cubbies | * wooden units on wheels with sections that are large enough for coats and books<br>(most have 10 to 30 box-like sections) | * screens for hiding and protecting storage areas<br>* bulletin board/display area (backs of units) |
| Roll Carts | * metal with 2 - 3 shelves on wheels | * transport of equipment and supplies from storage to program space<br>* moveable interest areas<br>* areas for storage of heavy equipment (T.V., stereo, etc.) |
| Storage Bins | * cardboard, plastic, wooden boxes or crates with these characteristics:<br>- like-size with tops for easy storage/stacking<br>- covered attractively for use in the program's environment<br>- easy to label in order to store related items together | * containers for "presto" environments/interest areas<br>* supply storage<br>* transport of supplies |

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES TO MAKE THE SPACE ATTRACTIVE AND COMFORTABLE:

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| Bean Bag Chairs | * Light weight versions that are:<br>- large enough for 1 or 2 children<br>- sturdy and comfortable<br>- durable and washable | * creates a homey, comfortable environment<br>* adds softness to the room<br>* encourages kids to gather for socializing, listening to music, playing quiet games, etc. |
| Mattress | * single size with attractive, clean, sturdy covering | * same as bean bag chairs |
| Rugs | * low pile area rugs (with under pads) large enough for a few children to gather on, but small enough to carry to and from storage areas if room must be set up daily | * creates softness and warmth<br>* encourages children to use the floor space<br>* creates an area for relaxing<br>* cuts down on noise levels in room |
| Curtains | * shower curtains or or fabric that can hang from a dowel rod attached to the ceiling, window, or hung between large furniture pieces | * attractive covering that gives space a soft feeling<br>* helps to create boundaries in the room |
| Styrofoam Sheets | * insulation sheeting purchased at hardware stores:<br>- sizes available: 2'x 3', 3'x 5', 4' x 6'<br>- lightweight for easy hanging over shelf units, etc. | * bulletin boards (items can be posted using push pins)<br>* screening of storage areas<br>* creates more private areas in the room |

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| Tri-Wall Cardboard | * cardboard that is thick and very sturdy, suitable for a variety of decorative uses and construction projects | * room dividers (can be designed, built, and decorated by the children)<br>* clubhouses or private nooks (again, can be created by children) |
| Blocks | * large hollow building blocks | * can be used daily by children to create private areas |

### How to Put It All Together

Before you make final decisions about what furniture and equipment will best suit your program needs, take time to review your answers to the planning questions listed earlier. Always keep in mind that your goal is to select furniture, equipment, and supplies that will help you create a rich and varied program for the children even though part or all of the environment may need to be set up and taken down daily. Even in shared space, several separate interest areas should be set up daily so that children can work on a variety of tasks, gain skills, build self confidence, and socialize with friends in a relaxed atmosphere. In shared space settings, interest areas should be viewed as well organized, portable modules or kits that can be set up and stored away as easily as possible. While it will probably not be feasible to set up every interest area every day, programs should develop a number of modules or kits to combine in different ways to keep the program varied and stimulating. However, areas that help give the program a soft, homelike, relaxed feeling should be put in place daily (eg. areas with bean bag chairs, rugs, etc.)

Quality school-age child care programs usually include a number of the interest areas and functional areas listed below. After choosing the areas you want to include in your program, take the time to list both the activities that will take place in each area and the supplies you will need on hand to accomplish these activities. (See Samples for Reading and Games Areas.) Then, match each area with the furniture, equipment, and decorative supplies that will help make the planned activities work smoothly.

## Options for SACC Interest Areas and Functional Areas

### Reading

Activities. reading, browsing, relaxing, pencil and paper games, storytelling, looking at displays, creative writing, doing homework, or just being alone to think.

Supplies. books (mystery, sports, animal, cooking, story, dictionary, book of world records, etc.), comic books, magazines (sports, fashion, wildlife, cars, etc.), local newspapers, current events board (sports events, TV and radio schedules, community events), feltboard and felt shapes for stories, globe.

### Games

Activities. small group and individual games, developing manipulative skills, thinking, socializing, competing, cooperating.

Supplies. variety of store bought, catalog, board games, computer games, playing cards, puzzles, home-made games

Additional Interest and Functional Areas (Develop lists of Activities and Supplies for each):

Art and Crafts
Listening/Music/Visual Aids
Dramatic Play/Housekeeping
Science/Nature
Active Games
Clubhouse
Snack Preparation/Cooking
Parent Bulletin Boards
Cubby and Locker Area
Teacher/Administrative Area

## The Last Word: Careful Planning and Advance Preparation Are the Keys to Creating Successful "Presto" Environments for SACC.

Here is a review of the steps to take in planning programs that will use shared space:

1. Gather information and analyze your space, your program goals, and your program resources.
2. Research furniture, equipment, and decorative materials and supplies that are suitable for your space and program goals.
3. Develop lists of the interest and functional areas you want your program to include, complete with a list of the activities and supplies associated with each area.
4. Match each program area with furniture, equipment, and supplies that will make the area work best. Secure the resources you need and develop each area as a portable module or kit.
5. Arrange the space in a way that will allow children to choose from a variety of exciting activity choices, to select their own materials, and most of all, to feel comfortable and have a good time with you and their friends at SACC!

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## KEEPING PARENTS INFORMED

**by Roberta L. Newman**

Several years ago I noticed a sign in a poster shop: "To Know nothing is to imagine everything." It struck me at the time that we in child care often put parents in that kind of position. On the one hand, we assume that they are aware of what our programs are like and how their children are doing. Yet, unless we make a conscious effort to let them know what's going on, parents must depend on their children for information and use their imaginations to fill in the blanks themselves. Some parents imagine everything is wonderful when it really isn't. Other parents are nervous about what they don't know. Based on very little information, they may develop a negative impression about the quality of care their child is receiving.

When children are not with them, parents want to know what and how they're doing. Parents like to hear about the little things their children say and do--anecdotes about daily happenings that give them insights about how children see the world. They also want to know when children are having problems. It's up to us as responsible child care professionals to keep them informed.

If we agree that good parent/caregiver communication is essential, what can we do to make sure it happens? I have found it helpful to think in terms of three basic steps:

1. Share Information

   **Set up formal ways for parents to learn about daily and weekly happenings in your program.** Start out right. Think through what kinds of orientation materials parents need to have: policy and procedural statements, health and safety guidelines, program philosophy and standards, descriptions of the daily program structure, etc. Once children are attending your program, keep the information coming. Use parent bulletin boards, calendars of events and regular newsletters.

   **Remember that sharing information implies a two-way exchange of information.** Find out about children's needs and interests and parent expectations through intake conferences or interest survey forms. Offer discussion groups in which parents can clarify their understanding of the program and explore ways the program can better meet the needs of parents and children.

**Communicate regularly about each child's experience in the program.** Take time to send home "good news" notes or make a short phone call when a child learns a new skill, solves a hard problem, makes something beautiful, says something funny, or has an especially happy day.

2. Build Relationships

Communication experts tell us that the more we talk to one another, the more positive our attitude toward communicating becomes. Brief exchanges between child care professionals and parents at drop off and pick up times help build friendly, open relationships. Daily warm greetings and goodbyes help children and parents feel comfortable and important.

In addition to informal daily chats, plan opportunities for parents to be involved in your program so you can get to know each other. Invite parent participation in family picnics, potlucks, or other social events. Include parents in special program activities like songfests, visiting performers, or field trips. If you have a large program, don't forget to invite parents to help with special projects like building a playground or repairing program equipment.

3. Share Problems

Even if child care providers take the time to build relationships and share information with parents, sharing problems is never easy. Yet, it is one of the most important things caregivers must do. It's also something providers must expect to do rather frequently. While parents are often understandably apprehensive about discussing problems, they don't want to be kept in the dark. They want to know. How can child care professionals meet the challenge of sharing problems or concerns with parents in the most effective way? Here are a few suggestions:

- **Share problems at the right time and in the right place.** When you have real concerns, never share them casually or in front of other people. Plan thoughtfully and set up a private meeting (or a private phone call if a meeting is impossible). Keep in mind that it's often difficult for parents and caregivers to focus productively on problem sharing and problem solving at the end of a long work day when they may feel emotionally, mentally, and physically drained.

* **Start a problem sharing conversation by offering some positive comments first.** Remember what Haim Ginott said in his book Teacher and Child, "When a teacher talks to parents about their children, he inevitably intrudes on family dreams." End your meeting with positive comments, too, if at all possible.

* **When describing the problem, be factual and objective.** Avoid preaching, blaming, criticizing, or judging.

* **Monitor the reactions of parents.** As you talk with parents about problems, maintain eye contact and be aware of body language or words that indicate the parent may be feeling tense, hurt, disappointed, or angry.

* **As questions, get advice, and invite parents to work with you.** Remember that parents know their children better than anyone else. Find out if they have the same perspective and expectations of their children as you do. Work towards agreeing on strategies and solutions to solve the problem. Stress consistency between home and provider.

* **Listen.** When you solicit comments and suggestions from parents, be sure you really listen to what they have to say. Keep these active listening criteria in mind:

  - Be genuinely open to hearing ideas and opinions. Take time to hear parents out. Don't interrupt. Don't rush.

  - Acknowledge and reflect parent's feelings. Be willing to accept feelings even if they're different from your. Check your perceptions of parents' feelings and opinions by re stating what you have understood them to say.

Trust parents' abilities to find solutions to problems. Productive parent/caregiver communication is always in the best interest of the children. It never happens by accident, however. It takes thoughtful planning and attention.

## Resource List

The following selected resources are suggested as basic tools for building quality out of school programs for school-age children. (A number of the books are available through the Resource Catalog of School-Age NOTES. The listing "SAN" follows the listing of items which can be ordered through School-Age NOTES, PO Box 40205, Nashville, TN 37204. Telephone: 615-242-8464. Many other resources are also available through this catalog.)

The Activities Club Theme Guides (1994) Joan M. Bergstrom. Belmont, Massachusetts: Children's Out-of-School Time, Inc. Includes separate guides on how to organize 14 different clubs with school-age children. Supplementary Theme Kits and Activity Boxes also available. (Contact: Children's Out-of-School Time, Inc. 30 Church Street, Suite 210, Belmont, MA 02178. Telephone: 800-873-5487.

Activities for School-Age Child Care. (1977) Rosalie Blau, Elizabeth Brady, Ida Bucher, Betsy Hiteshew, Ann Zavitkovsky, Docia Zavitkovsky. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

All the Best Contests for Kids, 4th Edition. (1994) Joan M. Bergstrom and Craig Bergstrom. Berkeley, California: Ten Speed Press. (May be purchased from: Children's Out-of-School Time, Inc., 30 Church St., Suite 210, Belmont, MA 02178. Telephone: 800-873-5487.)

Creative Conflict Resolution: More Than 200 Activities for Keeping Peace in the Classroom. (1984) William J. Kriedler. Glenview Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company. SAN

Developmentally Appropriate Practice in School-Age Child Care Programs, Second Edition. (1993) Kay Albrecht and Margaret Plantz. Alexandria, Virginia: Project Home Safe, American Home Economics Association. (Contact: Kendall/Hunt Publishing, P.O. Box 1840, Dubuque, IA 52004-1840. Telephone: 800-228-0810.

Half a Childhood: Time for School-Age Child Care (1984) Judith Bender, Barbara Schuyler-Haas Elder, CHarles H. Flatter. Nashville, Tennessee: School-Age NOTES. SAN

The Kids Can Help Book: Lend a Hand, Volunteer, Share a Skill, Make a Difference. (1992) Suzanne M. Logan. New York, New York: Cloverdale Press, Inc.

Kids Club: A School-Age Program Guide for Directors (1990) Linda G. Sisson. Nashville, Tennessee: School-Age NOTES. SAN

The New Youth Challenge: A Model for Working with Older CHildren in School-Age Child Care (1988) Steve Musson and Maurice Gibbons. Nashville, Tennessee: School-Age NOTES. SAN

School-Age Child Care: An Action Manual for the 90s and Beyond, Second Edition. (1993) Michelle Seligson and Michael Allenson. Westport, Connecticut: Auburn House. SAN

School-Age Ideas and Activities for After School Programs. (1990) Karen Haas-Foletta and Michele Cogley. Nashville, Tennessee: School-Age NOTES. SAN

School-Age NOTES: The Newsletter for School-Age Professionals. (Contact: School-Age NOTES, PO Box 40105, Nashville, TN 37204. Telephone: 615-242-8464)

School's Out! Resources for Your CHild's Time, Afternoons, Weekends, Vacations. (1990) Joan M. Bergstrom. Berkeley, California: Ten Speed Pres. SAN

Standards for Quality School-Age Child Care. (1993) Alexandria, Virginia: National Association of Elementary School Principals. (Contact: NAESP, 1615 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 23314. Telephone: 703-684-3345.

The Survival Guide to School-Age Child Care (1988) Betsy Arns. Huntington Beach, California: School-Age Workshops Press. SAN